LIBRARY REDEEMER COLLEGE Dec09
777 GARNER RD E
ANCASTER ON L9K 1J4

PM# 40009999 R9375

CHRISTIAN COURIER

May 11, 2009

No. 2864 $2.00

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36
MAY 14 2009

Book reviews . . .
pgs. 10, 11, 14, 15, 16

Missed already . . . p. 18

63rd year of publication

Zimbabwe: land of faded dreams

This year there is more food available in Bulawayo.

Bert Witvoet

BULAWAYO – Zimbabwe is a troubled country. Its economy is in shambles after Robert Mugabe's foolhardy attempts to rid the country that was once the breadbasket of southern Africa of its white farmers and reward himself and his cronies with the left-over wealth that is fast slipping away from the country's coffers. The Zimbabwean dollar has been devalued to the point where a trillion Zimbabwean dollar banknote is just a piece of paper. I could have purchased three such notes as a curiosity for $10 (US) had I wanted to a few days ago. But it almost seemed blasphemous to do so in the presence of my Zimbabwean host. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe is no joke. You can also tell by the thousands of potholes in the roads, and the dilapidated buildings of Bulawayo, the second-largest city in Zimbabwe, that the infrastructure is near collapse.

Useless wages

The family that invited us to stay with them consists of father, mother, and two sons (I have changed their names to protect them from state persecution). The eldest son, James, works at a factory. The mother, Nancy, works for the government. Both get paid in Zimbabwean dollars, a currency they can't use. The money piles up in their bank accounts as useless collateral. There's not a store or restaurant in the land that will accept the country's own currency. Even hawkers look down their noses at this monopoly money. Everyone is expected to pay in U.S. dollars or South African Rand. The Botswana Pula is also accepted in some instances.

So both mother and son receive an additional monthly "allowance" of $100 (US), from which the bank takes $10, leaving them with $90 each. It's called an allowance, not a wage, so that their employer is not under obligation to pay it when the US money is not there. But $180 a month is not enough for a family of four. So the father, Wilson, works in South Africa and uses his South African wages to supplement the family's income. He comes home once in two months, and, when he does, he is loaded down with groceries from South Africa. This time, when Alice and I accompanied him into Zimbabwe, we also were loaded down with groceries. Alice was responsible for a case of 60 eggs. Only one cracked while the case was stored in the bus with hundreds of other bags of groceries belonging to fellow passengers going home for Easter.

Collapse of the educational system

Son Robert was in his fourth year of high school last year. His parents wanted him to succeed in passing his matriculation exams so he could enrol in university. But the teachers in Robert's high school are not teaching. They, too, are being paid in Zimbabwean dollars without even so much as an allowance. So they refuse to teach. The only way Robert's parents could assure their son's success last year was to pay

See **Zimbabwe** *on page 2*

The original crisis: Food justice in the developing world

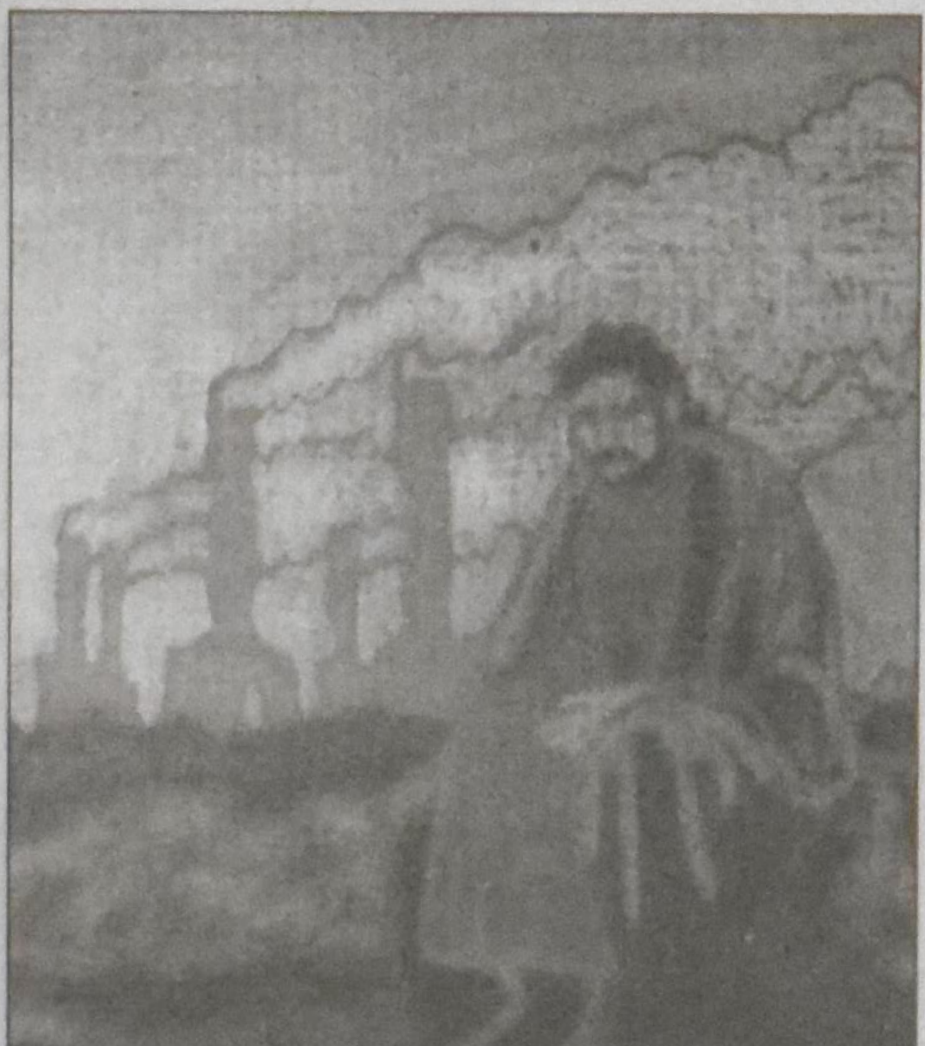


Image from Fast for Change: Seven Days of Food for the Soul, a booklet from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank which encourages Christians to reflect and act on faith, food, and justice.

Mike Hogeterp

OTTAWA – Well in advance of the economic crisis of today, a chronic international food security crisis took a dramatic turn for the worse. UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) tracking shows that chronic hunger affected 842 million people in 2006; this number grew to approximately 963 million in 2008. The jump in hunger rates was directly related to dramatic food price increases – in some developing countries, prices for grains and staples doubled, driving already vulnerable people into deeper poverty. FAO reports that the crisis impacts landless, female-led households the most significantly.

In mid 2008, the deepening crisis prompted leaders of the Micah Network, a southern-led Christian relief and development coalition, to write to churches in the North. They expressed thankfulness for Northern church partnership in sharing the hope of the Gospel, and then raised sobering words: "Millions of people in the global South are dying of hunger, violence and injustice. These situations of poverty and pain are not simply the product of the internal functions of our countries; rather, they are the results of the international policies of the governments that wield global power."

International response

At the turn of the millennium, Canada and most other countries in the world committed to an ambitious plan to combat poverty. The Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) first priority was to cut chronic hunger and poverty (defined as living on less than $1 per day) in half by 2015, and it is critical for the life and health of millions of people in the global South. "The MDGs should stir us to action," writes the Micah Network, "because they echo the calls of the biblical prophets for justice and equity. Further, they are achievable and measurable markers on the roadmap to end extreme global poverty."

Achievement of the first MDG will take significant commitment; estimates from the UN last year indicate a need for annual investments in agriculture and social supports in the range of $30 billion. Research demonstrates that poverty

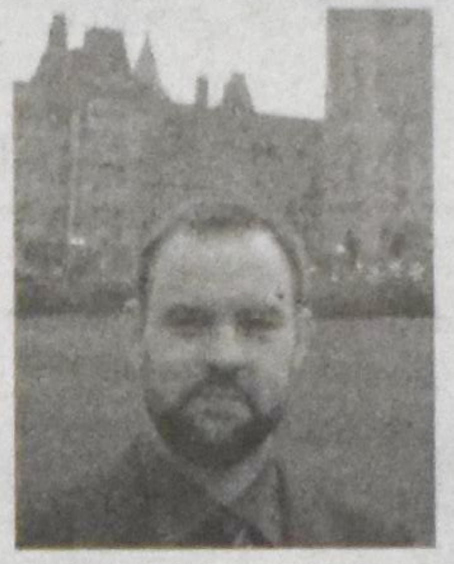
See **Food justice** *on page 2*

News

Food justice ... continued from page 1

reduction and agricultural development are intimately linked. According to the (Canadian) Food Security Policy Group, two-thirds of the world's rural population – three billion people – depend on the livelihoods generated by small farms of two hectares or less. Half of the world's food production happens on these farms, and the majority of these smallholder farms are run by women. The 2008 World Development Report suggests that agriculture growth has "special powers" for poverty reduction – it is at least twice as effective in poverty reduction as GDP growth outside of agriculture. Well-resourced aid programs that focus on agriculture can make a significant difference for the most vulnerable people in the world.

This long-running crisis of food insecurity has resulted in untold suffering for God's children. Their plight must be remembered by the churches in the North and West even in the midst of an economic crisis of a different, and lesser, degree.



Mike Hogeterp learned a love for agriculture and the land on summer farm jobs in Saskatchewan and the Ottawa valley. He works out a love for justice as the Research and Communications manager for Committee for Contact with the Government of the CRC in Canada.

Take personal action

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), a coalition of Christian relief and development groups and churches, has been leading advocates for more and better aid in Canada. Their Food Justice advocacy and education program has been a leader in drawing government and public attention to the critical importance of support for small-farm agriculture. CFGB, in cooperation with the Food Security Policy Group, is urging Canadians to ask their leaders to provide more agricultural aid to small-scale farmers as a response to the task of ending hunger. CFGB's challenge to Canadians and our government is an apt response to Micah Network's call:

Out of love for us, the global Church, in holiness, use your citizenship responsibly for the benefit of the entire world; it is for this very reason that the Lord poured out his life on the Cross.

What does hunger look like?

In North America, people spend roughly 10 to 20 per cent of their income on food. Higher grocery bills come as a minor annoyance. In the developing world, where food already accounts for up to 80 per cent of people's budgets, rising costs produce dire results. In an effort to keep food within reach, families in poor countries are forced to take drastic measures and make costly sacrifices:

- Children are pulled out of school.
- Children are forced into work, sometimes even in dangerous or unhealthy conditions.
- Families stop visiting health clinics or eliminate medication purchases to save costs.
- Families sell off their assets; first livestock, then farming equipment and tools.
- The middling poor, those on $2 a day, are pulling children from school and giving up vegetables so they can afford rice.
- Those on $1 a day are cutting back on meat, vegetables and one or two meals, so they can afford one bowl.
- The desperate – those on 50 cents a day – face disaster.

– "The impact of the crisis on children" from World Vision Canada

Zimbabwe ... continued from page 1

teachers to mentor their son. Thus they used part of the father's South African income to pay for a handful of mentors. As a result, Robert was able to write his matriculation exams and he expected a good outcome. He is, after all, a bright and dedicated student. The matriculation exams were written last November and sent to the capital of Zimbabwe, Harare, to be marked. By April the exams had not yet been marked. Consequently, Robert could not enrol at university in January and has already missed one year.

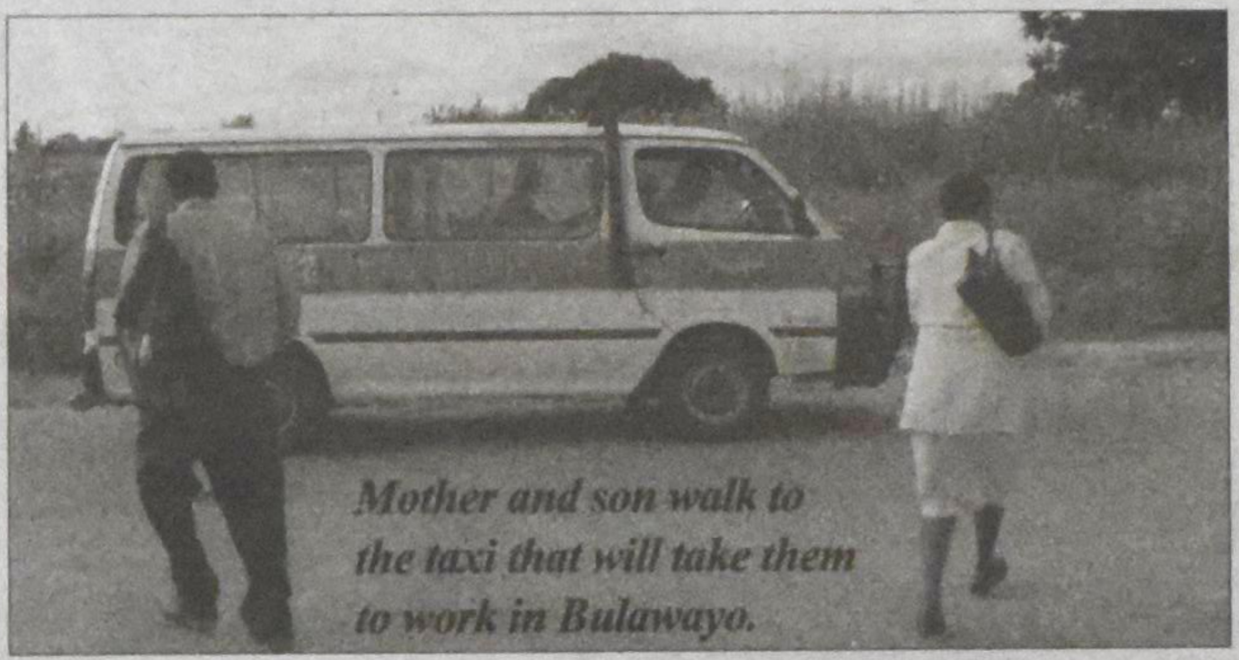
In the midst of all this adversity, one has to admire the resourcefulness of this family and of many other Zimbabweans who are suffering under the oppressive rule of an evil dictatorship.

Dark woods tell their tales

In the meantime, Robert Mugabe is clinging to power, even though the leader of the opposition, Morgan Tsvangirai, won the election last year. What this man Mugabe has not done in the past 25 years to gain and keep power and to enforce his will on the population very few of us can imagine. We caught a glimpse of it when we travelled from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls a few days ago, a six-hour drive.

We arrived after midnight in Hwange, a mining town that went through a terrible mine explosion in 1972 that took the lives of 427 miners. We looked for and found the house of a relative of our host family. We were to stay there for the night. We had been travelling in the dark for about five hours before that, hoping not to run into elephants, which roam around freely in that part of the country. We were passing through Matabele land. The Matabele constantly incur the wrath of Mugabe because they are not in the habit of voting for his ZANU (PF) party. The lady of the house where we were staying that night had prepared a full-course meal for us. After dinner, she told us that the woods through which we had travelled that evening had their stories of horror to tell.

In the 1980s, Mugabe had loosed his Fifth Brigade on the inhabitants of the various villages and hamlets between Bulawayo and Victoria Falls. The Fifth Brigade is a force that had been trained by North Korean special commandoes, known for their knowledge and practice of torture and murder. The villagers still living there could have told us their sad tales of how members of the Fifth Brigade had gathered people from their farms and homes at night, had forced them to dig holes,



Mother and son walk to the taxi that will take them to work in Bulawayo.

and had commanded many of them to lie down in these holes so they could be buried alive. The remaining villagers were ordered to sing and clap while their loved ones were being smothered by dirt. Thousands of Matabele were killed that way.

I had read about the Fifth Brigade and Mugabe's reign of terror beforehand, but to actually hear an account of this crime against humanity from a member of the Matabele people, and to have driven through these haunted forests at night was deeply disturbing. Had we not been extremely tired from the arduous journey and an after-midnight supper, we might not have slept well that night.

God still reigns

But we did sleep quite soundly. The morning came, the sun shone brightly, and we woke up early, refreshed. We had breakfast and prepared ourselves for a glorious day at one of the most famous waterfalls in the world. A statue of David Livingstone, missionary and explorer, who was the first white man to see this wonder of nature in 1855, overlooks the gorge. It was unveiled on November 16, 1955. A plaque at the foot of this more-than-life-size statue reads:

"On the occasion of the centenary of David Livingstone's discovery of Victoria Falls, men and women of all races in, and from all parts of, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland assembled solemnly to dedicate themselves and their country to carry on the high Christian aims and ideals which inspired David Livingstone in his mission here."

The falls are 1,708 meters wide, making it the largest curtain of water in the world. It drops between 90m and 107m into the Zambezi Gorge, and an average of 550,000 cubic metres of water plummet over the edge every minute. We saw this amazing giant force of God's creation at its peak volume. We

Alice (left) with our friends reading the plaque at the foot of the statue of David Livingstone.

got soaking wet, down to our underwear and wallets. Even Mugabe cannot not tame this powerful evidence of God's ultimate power and majesty!

Life goes on in Zimbabwe, for a time and a season, under the evil hand of a man who had been baptized Robert Gabriel Mugabe. Gabriel, indeed! But God will have the last word.

Bert & Alice Witvoet live in St. Catharines, Ontario. They were in South Africa for a month and a half this year along with six other Canadian Christian educators, for the purpose of strengthening indigenous Christian schools in the Limpopo province on behalf of Worldwide Christian Schools.

News

Russian Bombers and US Subs: Latest threats to Canada's Artic sovereignty?

Harold Alkema

Recent events have raised questions about Canada's ability to defend its vast territory and preserve its sometimes tenuous Arctic sovereignty. In February, Canadian fighter planes intercepted a Cold War-era Russian bomber encroaching on Canadian airspace. When signaled by the Canadian CF-18s, the Russian pilots immediately turned tail and returned home without any hostile action on either side.

Such incidents have become common over the North. This one may have gone unnoticed and unreported too, except that it coincided with the visit of US President Barrack Obama to Ottawa. A case could be made that the timing of the Russian foray was deliberate. Eyebrows were raised in Ottawa and Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Russian intrusions into Canadian skies "unacceptable." For the Russians, the ability to move through Canadian territory, no doubt, emphasizes their own Arctic claims and underlines their reclaimed status as a regional power in Europe, Asia and the Far North. US and Canadian planes have dealt with about twenty incidents where Russian planes entered or approached Canadian airspace.

Russian bombers

The picture of US and Canadian war planes confronting Russian bombers over Arctic skies might give the impression that the American are our allies, helping us to assert control over the Arctic. The situation is not so simple, however.

Tangled history

Ottawa has struggled to deal with the presence of US submarines in areas that the Canadian government considers its own internal waters. In 1995, then Defence Minister David Collenette asserted that the US Navy always asks the Canadian government for permission before moving submarines and other vessels through the Northwest Passage. Two months later, the government claimed that the Americans give Canada fair warning through NATO channels solely for the purpose of avoiding submarine collisions, "friendly fire" exchanges and other operational incidents. The current Conservative government has not dealt with the issue of US submarines in Canadian waters and tends to treat the operations as secret. In short, government policy on this issue is contradictory and confused, leaving the impression that the Americans are taking advantage of a junior partner.

Clearly the situation is complicated and there are no easy answers. If Canada decided to "back off" and be a good neighbour in the Arctic the essential problem would remain. In the same way if Canada "beefed up" its Arctic patrols and sent more ships, planes and troops into the region this would not constitute much of a threat to the superpower Americans and juggernaut Russians. Perhaps the time has come for trilateral talks on the Arctic, or broader based negotiations that would include other Arctic countries like Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. This might be especially prudent as climate change, increased Arctic navigation, and the discovery of mineral and fossil fuel resources in the North have made the territory more significant than ever.

Harold Alkema has a Master's Degree in History from the University of Waterloo. He currently works as a researcher in Ottawa with a private firm specializing mainly in Native Affairs issues and historical research.

Fr. Neuhaus' legacy

Principalities & Powers
David T. Koyzis

In 1992 I began subscribing to a journal called *First Things*, which had been started two years earlier by Richard John Neuhaus, a recent convert from Lutheranism to Roman Catholicism who would shortly be ordained a priest. Since then I have never once considered letting my subscription lapse.

Each issue has presented two or three opinion pieces, three or four thought-provoking articles, several book reviews and, at the end, Neuhaus' own reflections in "The Public Square," a blog-like series of brief commentaries on matters relating to the intersection of religion and public life. Many readers, myself included, would often turn to this section first, where they would be treated to Neuhaus' writing at its most incisive, animated and sometimes caustic.

Fr. Neuhaus' death in January has removed a significant figure from the North American religious scene. From his early days marching alongside Martin Luther King to his later years as an eloquent advocate for the pro-life cause, Neuhaus was in the limelight, never avoiding – and sometimes positively relishing – controversy. Although he was thought to have moved from the left to the right, he himself maintained that he was consistent throughout his life, applying the principles of liberalism to the rights of black Americans and the unborn alike.

At his best when he was skewering the pretensions of late liberalism in the public square, Neuhaus was a master of English style and had a keen eye for the absurdities of this ideology, which he treated in his own inimitably witty fashion. He had a talent for locating and articulating the inconsistencies of the political correct, the pro-choice, Catholic dissidents from Catholic teachings, overreaching court judges, and secularizing élites who would limit religious freedom in the name of advancing what he famously labelled the naked public square, the title of his most widely read book.

He was an early proponent of what would later come to be called civil society, namely, those communal formations and initiatives springing from the initiative of the people themselves, and not from the direction of the state. The essay he co-authored three decades ago with Peter Berger, *To Empower People*, was an eloquent statement in favour of protecting civil society in all its rich variety. This naturally resonated with the neocalvinist heirs of Abraham Kuyper's sphere sovereignty.

One of the enduring themes in Neuhaus' writings is the enlarged role that the American judiciary has unilaterally assumed in decreeing sweeping social changes in the face of recalcitrant legislatures. This grew out of his opposition to the abortion licence decreed by the Supreme Court in 1973, which removed most legal protections from the most vulnerable of our fellow human beings. In the November 1996 issue, *First Things* published a controversial symposium titled, "The End of Democracy: The Judicial Usurpation of Politics," which prompted resignations from the journal's editorial board.

A few weeks ago the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, appointed a new president and dean who once preached a sermon calling abortion a "blessing." Many of us reflexively waited for a scathing assessment of the situation by Fr. Neuhaus, only to recall sadly that it would not be coming. He will definitely be missed. Let us pray that God will raise up someone – or probably more than one person – capable of doing what Neuhaus did during his eventful life.

Although I confess to being a fan of Neuhaus' writings, I cannot call myself an unqualified proponent of his overall approach, which is where his professed liberalism comes into play. I will return to this in a future column.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is now into his 20th year of writing in this space. His blog is: http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/

OBERAMMERGAU TOURS 2010

We are pleased to offer a variety of tours to Oberammergau.

Departure	Tour Host
May 18	Dr.Bill Mundt
May 25	John DeSchiffart
June 22	Rev.David Sherbino
June 29	Rev.John Klomps
July 06	Rev.Mike Sherbino
August 31	Rev.George Anderson
Sept.21	Earl Clint

These tours offer a variety of itineraries and are handled by the Aurora office. For tour details visit our website at:
www.verstraetetravel.com

AMSTERDAM FLIGHTS 2009

Martinair has stopped flying from Canada.
We can offer you charter flights on ***Air Transat*** as well as ***KLM Royal Dutch Airlines***.
Contact the St.Catharines office for a competitive quote.
Shop and book online www.verstraetetravel.com

VERSTRAETE TRAVEL & CRUISES
36 Secord Drive, St.Catharines ON L2N 1K8
Tel.**905 934-4414** or long distance **1800 405-6088**
email: niagara@verstraete.com

Editorials

What broken really means

Gaye Clark

I could not help noticing recently how popular the word "broken" has become in our society. Last year, John McCain used the word in several campaign ads to describe our economy. In the last five years, more than eight movies have sported "broken" in their titles. Maranatha Records produced several Christian alternative albums under the label Broken Records. Seth Godin, a consumer advocate and public speaker, traveled around the country making presentations on the state of brokenness in consumer goods. Godin explains the difficulty of getting a manufacture to admit their product needs repair. He explains, "If I think it's broken then it's broken; the problem is that the person who made it might not care." *God made me, and if I'm broken, I think he cares.*

I took this entire adjectival overload in stride until a certain Sunday morning in church when a guest preacher chose brokenness for his subject matter. Without a Bible in his hands, he paced the floor in a frenzy, scanning the congregation for brokenness and asked for volunteers.

"How many of you are broken, I mean *really* broken?"

All over the room hands flew up in gleeful confession.

The preacher who asked the question assumed everyone in the room knew what he meant. Obviously many did, since they responded so quickly, but somehow I missed it. What did he mean by "broken"? I listened for further explanation.

"Something's wounded many of you deeply. I am so sorry for your pain. A broken person needs compassion. In a way, everybody's broken." The minister preached with his entire body, he crouched to his knees in an effort to demonstrate the depth of his sincerity. Tear-stained faces filled the hallway as we filed out of church.

"That was *so* beautiful," someone said.

Was it really?

The concept of broken I understood did not mesh well with the emotional euphoria I saw all over the church. I winced when Christian people referred to themselves as broken, as if it should be an end in itself. Like so many words on their way to becoming a cliché, "broken" has become used so often that now we hardly know what it means. Worse, we don't notice the words that the postmodern version of "broken" helps us avoid: sin and repentance.

A few years ago, Jars of Clay blew the dust off an old hymnbook and sang a markedly different image of this word: "Broken, humbled to the dust, by Thy wrath and judgment just." Those familiar words from Psalm 51 came out of King David's personal experience, but the Holy Spirit translated them.

As a repentant sinner, David confesses that *God* broke him, and completely humbled him, by *his wrath*. God works true brokenness, not people. Brokenness is a consequence for the sin in our lives, not the injuries we've endured. That's the bad news. But God did not leave us there. In verse 8, David laments, "Let the bones that you have broken rejoice."

Yes, brokenness *is* a good thing, if God is the author of it. It demonstrates the fact that God, who is rich in mercy, refuses to allow us to go our own way. Instead, he chastises us in order to bring us to a true state of repentance.

Based on this understanding of brokenness, what question would the preacher have asked the congregation?

"How many of you have sinned against a holy God?'

That question leaves little room for confusion, but it sounds harsh to the postmodern mind. In reality, the severity of God is the essence of his kindness to us. God breaks us that we might agree with him that we have sinned, confess it and receive forgiveness. Forgiveness transforms our life. We do not have to remain broken forever. Christ can restore us. That's the good news.

At the end of Psalm 51, David's broken state undergoes a transformation. "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you…. My tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O LORD. Open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise (ESV).

Now *that* is beautiful.

Gaye Clark (gbc@knology.net) is a freelance writer, cardiac nurse and fulltime homemaker. She lives in Augusta Georgia with her husband and two teenage children. They attend First Presbyterian Church, PCA.

Christian Courier

Founded in 1945

An independent bimonthly that seeks to: report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

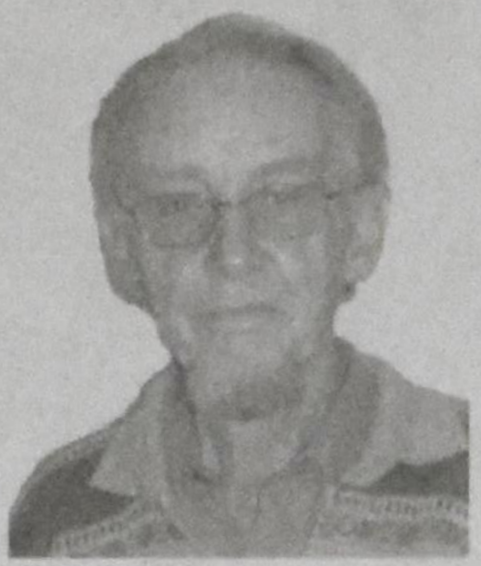
Op-Ed Editor: Bert Witvoet **bert.witvoet@sympatico.ca**
News Editor: Angela Reitsma Bick **angela@christiancourier.ca**
Feature Editor: Brett Alan Dewing **brett@christiancourier.ca**
Circulation/Fam.ads: Rose der Nederlanden **rose@christiancourier.ca**
Admin/Bus.ads/Web: Ineke Medcalf-Strayer **ads@christiancourier.ca**

Church Page Editor: Marion Van Til **marianvantil@roadrunner.com**
Contributing Editor: Peter Schuurman **eternalstudent@sympatico.ca**

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact circulation if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier*.

Christian Courier
5 Joanna Dr, St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Web site: www.christiancourier.ca
Publications Mail Registration No. 09375
We acknowledge the assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs. Canada

Interfaith encounter on the road to Bulawayo



Bert Witvoet

My wife, Alice, and I were on the bus from Makhado, South Africa, to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. We occupied the two front seats on the left side of the bus. Across the aisle were two women – an elderly woman and a middle-aged one. The elderly woman, who was nearer to me, started talking to me.

Her English name was Eve. She was a spry 78-year-old lady with features that made me think she was of mixed African-maybe-Indonesian origin. That proved to be almost correct – the "Indonesian" part turned out to be East Indian. She was well-educated and could speak four or five languages. She told me she was a devout Muslim, but nothing in her dress indicated her religious affiliation. She told me that she thought that Jesus was not real, just a figment of people's imagination, until one night, during her regular devotions, she had an encounter with Jesus. She felt a strong presence in her body – a warmth in her upper body and a feeling of great joy. Then she heard a voice that said, "Now do you believe in me?" She knew it was Jesus, and, from there on, she realized that he was real. She spoke of Jesus as the Son of God, who came out of God's side. She said she loves this Jesus, and she loves to sing Christian hymns when she hears them on the radio. But, and this fascinated me, she remains a devout Muslim. In other words, Jesus is the son of Allah, the compassionate and merciful God of the Muslims.

After what she told me and I expressed my pleasure with her encounter with Jesus, I thought to myself, "Would that all Muslims had such an experience of Jesus in their lives. It certainly would bring healing to a lot of inter-religious strife, and it might even be possible to be a Christian Muslim. After all, what is 'Allah' but a name? We don't know God's real name, anyway. Is it possible to be a Christ-worshiping Muslim? How much stranger would that be compared to, say, a Christ-worshiping Catholic or Presbyterian, not to mention a Christ-worshiping consumerist? We all do tend to have a few strange deities kicking around in our closets."

Missed opportunity?

A friend of mine felt that I should have confronted Eve with a fuller understanding of the gospel. I should have mentored her much the way Ananius and other Christians in Damascus had mentored Saul after his encounter with Jesus on the road to that city. But Jesus had arranged that mentorship, and had even struck Saul with temporary blindness. This lady could see very well, and her experience had taken place several years before I met her. She and I had received no instructions about getting together. And what do you do when Jesus had impacted her life in a way that made her a very positive and happy person? It seemed that Jesus had adequately taken care of business as far as this lady was concerned.

Besides, this conversation took place on a bus as we approached the Zimbabwean border, which brought along a two-and-half-hour interruption to a conversation that was not restored afterwards, mainly because Eve changed seats with her friend. On top of that, the seats on the right side were not exactly lined up with the seats on the left, so that, when she was sitting near the aisle, I had to turn my head a bit and cause a crick in my neck as I listened to her fascinating story. Okay, okay, I am rationalizing now.

Back in Canada, I read a news story about an Episcopelian priest in Seattle, the Rev. Ann Holmes Redding, who had become a Muslim but also considers herself still to be a Christian. She says she was drawn to the Muslim faith by the discipline of prayer and total submission. While she joined her Muslim friends in prayer during the week, she continued to perform her priestly duties at her church until recently. How do I feel about that? There is a significant difference between the faith of my Zimbabwean acquaintance and that of the former Episcopelian priest, I believe. Ann Redding has difficulty seeing Jesus as the Son of God, she admits, a statement that does not fit Christianity. But my friend Eve has no such difficulty. She confesses him to be the Son of God, a confession that does not fit Islam. We live in interesting times, don't we?

So there I was, a devout Christian meeting a devout Muslim, on the way to Mugabe land. For an hour or so we seemed to get along like a house on fire. I had learned something new that I did not quite understand. And, unfortunately, I was at a disadvantage. I wasn't wearing a WWJD wristband.

Letters

Prefers unhyphenated Christian identity

Re: Anniversary year of Calvin's birth, several issues of CC

This summer, scholarly festivities and weighty parties will be thrown in honor of John Calvin's 500th birthday on July 10. We want to celebrate the good gifts God gave his church through this brilliant, godly man. Insomuch as Calvin points us to Jesus – and he ably did so – we thank God for this Reformer. Where the name of Calvin is used to sow discord, we back off, and humbly submit to the One who alone is Savior and God from among humankind.

As a preacher, my favorite New Testament commentator continues to be the late British scholar F.F. Bruce. His are the first New Testament commentaries I turn to when I need an interpretive insight. In his memoirs, Bruce recounts a time when someone asked him what kind of Christian he was. His reply was that he preferred to think of himself as an unhyphenated Christian." What he meant was that he saw himself as a Christian – not an evangelical-Christian, or a conservative-Christian, or a Plymouth-Brethren-Christian (even though this is where he fellowshipped) – just a Christian. He simply wanted to be known as one who followed Jesus of Nazareth. That he happened to be part of a particular Christian tradition or stream of Christian spirituality was an entirely secondary and ultimately unimportant matter. Here is where Bruce agrees with Paul who wrote: Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to mature Christians…. When one of you says, 'I am a follower of Paul,' and another says, 'I prefer Apollos,' aren't you acting like those who are not Christians?" (1 Cor. 3:1, 4, NLT).

For this reason, I hesitate to call myself a Calvinist the way some call themselves Lutherans or Mennonites or by some other Christian leader. When I confess the Apostles' Creed and declare that I believe in a holy, catholic church," I am fully aware that I am not saying I am a member of the Roman- or the Eastern Catholic Church, but part of all those past, present and even future who have been gloriously redeemed through Jesus our Lord.

Flawed Reformers

My reluctance is not in denial of the significant and mostly positive contributions John Calvin, Martin Luther, Menno Simons and others have made whose legacies continues in streams of Christianity which carry their names. But these and others like them were fractured people like the rest of us, but singularly unlike Jesus himself. Calvin wrote to his friend the French evangelist William Farel that it is all right with him if Michael Servetus would not exit Geneva alive due to his controversial views on the Trinity. Luther, for all his positive influence, has shamefully come down in history as one of Christianity's most vehement anti-Semites. And the history of the church is littered with unpleasant, even evil incidents where folks, allegedly believing in the same Jesus, used the originators of Christian traditions for deeply divisive infighting, not unlike the believers of ancient Corinth.

We do not have to agree on all fine points of theological finesse. In Christ we stand united not only in the grand theological truths of redemption and justification, but the reality of unifying love that the Holy Spirit has lavished upon us.

Walt Brouwer
Edmonton Alberta

Compulsory civic virtue?

Re: "Keep political party financing public, says CPJ," news story, January 12

Canada's interesting constitutional quandary of the last few months was precipitated, among other things, by Prime Minster Stephen Harper's proposal to end the $1.75 per vote subsidy for political parties. In a letter to the PM, Citizens for Public Justice vigorously disagrees with this, suggesting that it is important "to increase civic participation in public affairs."

There should be no quarrel with that goal; it is vital for a free society to have a high level of civic participation. But is this the way to do it? I don't think so; in fact, my dissent reveals a fundamental divide between a "progressive" and a more "conservative" vision. I believe it also reflects a basic difference between the American and Canadian propositions. Let me explain.

The issue is often portrayed in terms of a socially concerned communitarian mindset (Canada) versus an individualistic one (USA); the "Christian" preference is then obvious. But this is not a helpful characterization. Let's state up front that as human beings and citizens, even more so as Christians, we have a moral obligation to our neighbor, including providing assistance in times of need. So-called "rugged individualism" is not what we desire for community building.

The USA and associationalism

But to affirm that clearly and strongly does not yet tell us how this ideal should influence public policy and the task of the state. When Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830s as the basis for his magisterial work, *Democracy in America* (*DA*), what he found was not individualism at all but associationalism, the capacity of Americans to associate voluntarily in union for common purpose and need (*DA*, I, 2, 4; II, 2, 5). Tasks that are left to the government in France and to great Lords in Britain, he said, are accomplished in America by free associations of free people.

Tocqueville not only admired this feature greatly, he came to consider it essential to a free and democratic nation, the means to enlarge the heart, renew a culture, and keep business and industry healthy and alive. To put it differently, free association is the key to civic virtue and civic participation. But Tocqueville also took note, by contrast, of the alternative European pattern. There the same social power is "artificially" imposed on the people by elites in power and the result is to "exercise an insupportable tyranny even without wishing too; for a government knows only how to dictate precise rules." Tocqueville concludes: "In democratic countries the science of association is the mother science; the progress of all the others depends on the progress of the same" (*DA*, II, 2, 5).

European influence

And here you have the difference between the US and Canada; the difference between "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" and "peace, order, and good government." Thanks to its founding in the British imperial stream that opposed the American Revolution, Canada is temperamentally and in practice more European than American, more establishment and statist than voluntarist and associational, inclined to seek government fixes to problems instead of through free associations of free people.

That brings me back to government imposed civic virtue – publicly financed political parties. Political parties are supposed to be voluntary, a way for a free people in a democratic society to band together to achieve common goals. In the 2008 US election, in a nice ironic twist, Republican candidate John McCain accepted public money while now-President Obama, after first agreeing to do so, changed his mind and raised some $700 million while his poor Republican opponent was restricted to $85 million. The amounts are outrageous but it is still interesting that freely given funds were nearly ten times that doled out by the state.

When I was a student at Calvin College, in a well-intentioned policy to promote piety, chapel was compulsory; attendance was checked. The policy was a failure. Neither religious nor civic virtue can be legislated. Unless freely given it is not virtue; compelling people to do "good" as elites define it good, whether it be the size of the cars we drive or our contribution to the public in some other way, opens the door to tyranny. I would not have written a letter to protest the end of an involuntary contribution to a political party any more than I support compulsory union dues check-off laws. I value freedom because without freedom all the righteousness of public life is a mirage, a feel good chimera that masks tyranny.

My Calvinist and Dutch roots lead me to have a visceral reaction to all forms of tyranny, especially to those which today masquerade as angels of social justice and a deep love for my third country of citizenship, the land of the free and home of the brave.

John Bolt
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association

Canada Mail:
PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40009999
REGISTRATION NO. 9375
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO
CHRISTIAN COURIER
5 JOANNA DR
ST. CATHARINES ON L2N 1V1
email: **subscriptions@christiancourier.ca**

U.S. Mail:
Christian Courier
(USPS 518-090)
Second-class postage paid at
Lewiston NY
Postmaster: send address changes
to: Christian Courier, Box 110
Lewiston NY 14092

Subscriptions:	**Canada (G.S.T. incl.)**	**USA**	**Overseas**
one yr. (24 issues)	$44.00	$44.00 US	$85.00
two yrs. (48 issues)	$85.00	$85.00 US	

Advertising deadlines: display and classified advertising: Wednesday, 9 a.m. (12 days before publication date) See classified pages or web site **www.christiancourier** for more details. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published second and fourth Mondays of the month.

Address all correspondence to: 5 Joanna Dr, St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838
e-mail: Advertising: ads@christiancourier.ca
Subscriptions: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca

PRINTED IN CANADA

News

Governments have a responsibility to legislate moral issues

Re: Law: what is it good for? editorial, March 23

Thanks for the courage to tackle a prickly subject in this editorial. You make reference to *"the moral sphere of life."* When I think of "spheres," I think of Abraham Kuyper and the neo-Calvinist view of sphere sovereignty. Kuyper emphasized that Christ's lordship extended to all of these spheres, so any reference to a "moral sphere" certainly wouldn't fit with his view of the world (to which I largely subscribe).

Kuyper aside, I'm not sure there can be a moral sphere, because it necessarily means that something must fall outside of it. I hope you wouldn't argue that law, business, family, relationships, whatever, are all outside of this "moral sphere"? I would wonder what happens to fall inside the moral sphere – just discussions of morals that cannot be implemented anywhere else? I suppose it would mean that the only role of morals is for personal piety.

You ask: "Does the government have the right to legislate a moral issue?" and I think you ultimately conclude that the answer is maybe not. I strongly disagree and encourage you to give this some more thought. In fact, isn't one of the primary responsibilities of our governments to deal with moral issues? I think the taking of human life is a pretty large moral issue. The government does a lot to legislate against murder, and to prevent it, and punish it. Would you seriously question whether the government should be doing this? Or dealing with theft, certainly also a moral issue, or child or spousal abuse, or perjury, false advertising, or poverty?

Beliefs inevitably determine laws

One more comment on this "moral sphere" approach. You seem to assume that there is some sort of neutrality on moral issues – that is, Christians should "leave our moral laws out of our civic ones," as if that means civic laws will be untouched by morals, and as if that's a good thing. The problem is that there is no neutrality on any of these issues. Whether you're Christian, atheist, Muslim, agnostic, Hindu, humanist, or whatever, your beliefs (what you might call morals) will influence and even determine our laws. So by calling for Christians to withdraw from this, you're simply giving up the ground for someone else, and I'm not sure I understand why you'd think this is a good idea.

All of these competing world-views make a government's job very difficult. Much of doing justice is balancing between competing interests – between unions and workers, landlords and tenants, business and environment, spending restraint and poverty, and on and on. And it includes balancing between different religious or "moral" views, each of which pull the government in a certain direction and demand certain laws.

The origins of church-state separation

The secular response to this has tended to be this: we need a separation of church and state. I think much of this comes from a bastardization of the U.S. constitution, which was intended to ensure that the head of the state was not also the head of the church, and vice versa. This, of course, fits in well with Kuyper's view of sphere sovereignty and makes good sense. But this approach has been twisted – with much help from the media – into an argument that religion has no place in the public square whatsoever. As I understand it, your editorial is much closer to this approach than it is to a Reformed or neo-Calvinist view of religion and government. The end result is to turn religion into a matter of personal piety – you can observe your religion privately, carefully

Continued on page 7

Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman

Engineers don't just drive trains

Derek Schuurman

Most of us know that not all engineers drive a train. However, as a student entering engineering school, I don't think I knew much about what it really meant to be an engineer. Although engineering students have a well-deserved reputation for being wild and boisterous, the job of an engineer is not always that glamorous. Unlike doctors and lawyers, there are no exciting TV drama series that follow the intriguing lives of engineers. Most engineers toil anonymously behind the scenes, meticulously building the things that we take for granted everyday; things like bridges, cars, computers, cell phones, and blenders. Despite the fact that engineering has not captured the imaginations of TV producers, it is still a good and noble calling.

The Professional Engineers Act of Ontario defines the practice of professional engineering as "any act of designing, composing, evaluating, advising, reporting, directing or supervising wherein the safeguarding of life, health, property or the public welfare is concerned and that requires the application of engineering principles...." I would add that the study of engineering helps us develop tools to carry out the cultural mandate and the great commission. Technology has become an important tool in the work of missions and relief work worldwide. Responsible engineering can help us care for the earth and its creatures, and through it we can further unfold many of the possibilities in creation and culture.

It didn't take long for humans to start uncovering the possibilities in creation. In Genesis 4 we read of people like Jubal who was "the father of all who play the harp and flute" and Tubal-Cain "who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron." Others like Bezalel were given "...skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship" to help build the temple (Exodus 31:3-5). Others have misdirected their engineering "know-how." The story about the Tower of Babel describes improved construction methods (using bricks instead of stone and tar for mortar) that were used to build a tower for people to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11). Psalm 20 also speaks of those who "trust in chariots" instead of in the name of the Lord.

Many Canadian engineers can be spotted by the "iron ring" they wear on the pinky finger of their working hand. This ring is intended to remind working engineers of the ethical responsibilities that are associated with their work. I wore my iron ring for many years, but it no longer fits very well – I would like to say it has "shrunk" (along with the leather jacket that I wore in university) but that would not be true.

After an engineer has graduated from a recognized engineering school and has been working in the field of engineering for a number of years, they can apply for their "professional engineer" designation. The application process involves writing a "professional practice exam" (which I recently wrote), which tests the individual's knowledge of engineering law and ethics. The designation allows people to place the title "Professional Engineer" behind their name and they are entrusted with an engineering stamp. The stamp can be used to certify engineering drawings and plans that they have personally supervised, with all the responsibility (and liability) which that entails.

Part of the professional practice exam is a test of the engineering "code of ethics," which in Ontario is part of the Professional Engineers Act. This code of ethics includes requirements to show "fairness and loyalty" to all, be devoted to "personal honour and professional integrity," and to treat other engineers with "courtesy and good faith." In particular, engineers must regard the "duty to the public welfare as paramount" in their practice. Because of their training and expertise, engineers must hold the proper "standard of care" in their work.

The profession of engineering is an honourable vocation when it is directed to developing responsible technology and useful products to serve others. The engineering ethical guidelines which emphasize the duty to public welfare are ones which Christians can appreciate. After all, no matter what our vocation, we are called to an even higher "standard of care" when it comes to the welfare of those around us: we are called to love our neighbour as ourself.

Dr. Derek Schuurman (dschuurman@cs.redeemer.ca) and his wife and four children live on the Hamilton mountain. He teaches at Redeemer University College, which now offers a new Pre-Engineering program. For more information about this program, visit: http://cs.redeemer.ca/engineering/.

News

Country Living
M. van der Galien

Canada ranks behind Brazil and Argentina in no-till acres

Maynard van der Galien

In the past 30 years, innovative farmers have turned their attention to soil conservation. Many who have adopted no-till, like it. There are some farmers for whom no-till hasn't worked. Others are in the process of implementing it.

In no-till agriculture, farmers plant seeds without using a plow to turn the soil. No-till minimizes soil disruption. Crop residues are left on the fields after harvesting, and this acts as a mulch, protecting the soil from erosions and maintaining soil productivity. Seeds are sown using special machines that penetrate through the mulch to the undisturbed soil below, depositing the seeds through a slit in the soil where they germinate and surface as a new crop.

A down-side to the no-till method is that a no-till drill or seeder is quite expensive, it's big and it requires a 100-plus horsepower tractor to pull the machine. A bigger down-side is the required increased use of expensive herbicides and pesticides to deal with weeds and bugs that plowing would have minimized. That's the scary part.

No-till agriculture is currently practiced on only seven per cent of agricultural land world-wide. Eighty-five per cent of this no-till land is located in North and South America.

Of the top five countries with the largest areas under no-till, the U.S. ranks first, followed by Brazil, Argentina, Canada and Australia.

Embracing no-till has been especially difficult in developing countries in Africa and Asia, because farmers there often use the crop residues for fuel, animal feed and building materials.

In Europe, an absence of government policies promoting no-till, along with elevated restrictions on pesticides and herbicides among other variables, leaves farmers with little incentives to change their tillage practices. Governments in Europe do not encourage no-till (unlike in the U.S.), and there are many restrictions on herbicide and pesticide use. The increased usage of the chemicals in no-till agriculture is something to consider.

Another reason many farmers in some countries (and in the Pacific north-west U.S.) have shied away from no-till is because the elevated moisture levels associated with no-till can promote soil-borne fungal diseases that tillage previously kept in check. The discovery of new crop diseases has sometimes accompanied the shift to no-till.

Plowing is the traditional method of preparing the land for sowing and planting crops. This turning of the soil buries crop residues, animal manure and weeds, and also warms and aerates the soil. But on light soils plowing also leaves the soil susceptible to erosion by wind and water and leads to degradation of agricultural land, posing a global threat to food production and to rural livelihoods, particularly in densely populated developing countries.

Western Australian farmers established the West Australian No-Tillage Farmers Association (WANTFA) in 1992. Even though eighty-six per cent of their growers practice no-till, it has had its problems.

No matter what, no-till has quickly taken over from the traditional way of planting crops.

Experts on no-till I spoke with say farmers have to give it three years before they can see results. Some farmers get discouraged after the first or second year and they go back to plowing the fields. They lost out what they could have accomplished by going back to plowing.

There are fewer input costs with no-till. The savings are on fuel because there's no plowing, disking or cultivating to do. When a farmer tills (disks or cultivates) the soil, it means at least two trips over a field to make it level and smooth. That's where he is saving money on not operating that big tractor. But with no-till he is now pulling a big disked seeder machine in undisturbed soil. You get the picture.

It takes a few years for the soil to change with no-till. Crop residue takes much longer to decompose. The soil doesn't warm up as quickly as it does with tilling the soil. Tilling also enriches the soil to hasten the decomposition of crop residue, weeds and other organic matter. Still, experts say, the benefits of switching to no-till farming practices outweigh those of traditional planting.

Some experts say farmers can afford to have a reduced yield with no-till – during the first few years. One crop advisor I spoke with said he believes in no-till when it's done under good conditions, but not in fringe growing areas and not on cold, wet, untiled clay fields.

To till or to no-till, that is the question.

Maynard van der Galien is an eastern Ontario agricultural writer. He farms near Renfrew.

Morals *... from page 6*

evangelize, and maybe even have an institution or two (like *CC*!) as long as you are careful to ensure that you don't try to apply any of your beliefs to the public square (or "civic sphere"). Unfortunately, this would prevent Christians from doing many of the very things the Bible urges them to do.

I'm not clear from your editorial about what you really think: how should the government decide what to legislate? You suggest that Christians should keep their "morals" out of it, but while that removes one source of input, it doesn't clarify where the remaining input comes from.

Laws built into the fabric of the world

I'd encourage you to consider another angle. I think that the government doesn't really create much in the way of law. I think the government establishes and implements laws that reflect God's laws. Killing is wrong because God created life, and because he reserves the right to take life (except in certain circumstances, and murder isn't one of them). Killing is NOT illegal because some government decides it is. In fact, if a referendum were held to legalize murder, and 80 per cent of the population voted in favour of such, government should still not legalize it. That's a silly example, but there are more serious historical examples: slavery, for example, where a majority of the population may well have supported it, but it remained wrong.

The rules that God built into creation are not only physical ones, but also moral ones. Again, killing and stealing are easy examples. They are not wrong because some government or law says so. They are because God built that into the fabric of the world. You can look at certain countries where corruption and theft are rampant, and sanctioned by government. No one there might recognize God's laws, and no authority tries to follow them, but they're still there. But what if Christians would say, "We'll just stay out of that debate and leave our moral laws out of our civic ones"? The result would mean suffering and destruction for our society, Christians and non-Christians alike. And, rather than having "returned to Scripture and discovered our mandate," as you suggest, we would have ignored so much of Scripture and our mandate. We would have failed to be a salt, and a light; and most shamefully, we would have taken life-saving truths and hidden them from those who can't see them without our help. But, presumably, we would have invited people to church and told them that Jesus loved them, so that at least they'd know that before they were killed or robbed. Perhaps we'd be fast-tracking people to heaven!

Bringing God's laws to light

Since I disagree with your position, I think it's fair to set out what I think is a more appropriate one. I don't think Christians should cede an inch in the public square, but neither should we be placard-waving, Bible-thumping zealots. I see little point in quoting Scripture to people who don't believe in Scripture. Yes, it's important that we work on their hearts and bring them to see the truth that way, but we can't leave it at that.

I think Christians should do much more to help open eyes to God's laws. On the matter of gay marriage, this can be done by pointing out that family relationships are simply outside of the scope of government. (That doesn't mean the government, having recognized that those relations exist, doesn't have some role in administering them – such as taxes, child support, family courts. If we point out that government can't redefine your cousins, it will cause people to at least think about why government thinks it can redefine spouses. We also need to step up and show that these discussions are not about religious-versus-secular behaviour (though you fell for that one in your column, I think) and rather keep reminding people that, in a sense, everyone is religious and that atheism and humanism are certainly religions – this is about competing religious views. We need to keep in mind – even if this sounds arrogant – that we know truths about God's world that others do not readily see, and we have a responsibility to bring those truths to light.

All of this is a very, very long way of saying: there is no "moral sphere," and, in fact, Christians have a duty to participate in the public square and not retreat from it, because it's not religiously neutral at all. We must do so in a way that makes clear God's design of the world and that doesn't involve preaching or condemning. This may be difficult, but, unlike the atheists and humanists, we can ask God for help.

– Name withheld by request for job-related reasons.

Church

100 million Christians persecuted worldwide

N. Korea tops list

SANTA ANA, Calif. (Open Doors) – The oppressive, isolated country of North Korea headed by dictator Kim Jong Il retains its grip as the worst persecutor of Christians in the world.

According to Open Doors' 2009 World Watch List released earlier this year, North Korea ranks No. 1 for the seventh year in a row. Christians are persecuted constantly under the communist government there, which denies human rights to all its citizens.

The Wahhabi kingdom of Saudi Arabia is No. 2 and Iran No. 3. Both countries are ruled by Shariah law.

Afghanistan, Somalia and the Maldives take the fourth, fifth and sixth positions. Afghanistan moved up three spots on the list this year as a result of increased pressure from the Taliban during 2008. Yemen is No. 7, Laos No. 8, Eritrea No. 9 and Uzbekistan No. 10.

Somalia and Eritrea are new countries to the Watch List. In Somalia, the number of incidents against Christians increased dramatically in 2008, explaining its rise to No. 5 from No. 12 in 2007. For Eritrea, there was no major change in the lack of religious freedom for Christians. Around 3,000 Christians are being held in Eritrean prisons.

China and Bhutan dropped out of the top 10 with China now No. 12 and Bhutan No. 11. Islam is the majority religion in seven of the top 10 countries: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Maldives, Yemen and Uzbekistan. Two countries have communist governments: North Korea and Laos.

Freedom evaporating

"It is certainly not a shock that North Korea is No. 1 on the list of countries where Christians face the worst persecution," says Carl Moeller, President/CEO of Open Doors USA. "There is no other country in the world where Christians are persecuted in such a horrible and systematic manner. Open Doors has an on-going prayer campaign for North Korea, which includes opportunities to advocate for the oppressed believers there."

The status of religious freedom for Christians deteriorated in 2008 in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan (No. 13), Iraq (No. 16), Mauritania (No. 18), Algeria (No. 19), India (No. 22), Northern Nigeria (26), Indonesia (No. 41), Bangladesh (No. 43) and Kazakhstan (No. 50 and new on the top 50 list).

Killed for witnessing online

Persecution continues unabated in Saudi Arabia. Five months after the daughter of a member of Saudi Arabia's religious police was killed for writing online about her faith in Christ, Saudi authorities arrested a 28-year-old Christian man for describing his conversion and criticizing the kingdom's judiciary on his website, according to Compass Direct News.

Saudi police arrested Hamoud Bin Saleh on Jan. 13 "because of his opinions and his testimony that he had converted from Islam to Christianity," according to the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information.

In Iran, a major crackdown on house churches occurred and a large number of Christians were arrested, marking 2008 as one of the toughest years regarding Christian persecution since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

In Afghanistan, a Western Christian aid worker was killed because, according to the Taliban, she was spreading Christianity in Afghanistan, which is prohibited by law in the country.

In Somalia, Open Doors received reports of at least 10 Christians killed for their faith in 2008 and several others kidnapped and raped. Pressure on the Christian minority in Pakistan continued unabated.

Bombings, kidnapping, murders

Iraq's Christian minority faced a year full of violence in 2008. Churches were attacked or damaged by bombs, Christians received death threats and several Christians were murdered, abused and/or kidnapped.

For years India has ranked No. 30 on Open Doors' persecution index. This year it moved to No. 22 primarily because in the third quarter of 2008 there was the worst outbreak of religious violence on record for Christians in India, especially in the state of Orissa. The number of incidents regarding arrests, physical harassment, abductions and church attacks remained high all over India.

"The escalation of violence against Christians in India in 2008 is very troubling," says Moeller. "Please pray for believers there."

Improvements in Vietnam

In a major positive development, fewer believers were harassed in Vietnam this year. Open Doors also recorded fewer reports of persecution of Christians in Colombia this year. As a result, this long-time World Watch List country fell off the list.

An estimated 100 million Christians worldwide suffer interrogation, arrest and even death for their faith in Christ, with millions more facing discrimination and alienation. Open Doors supports and strengthens believers in the world's most difficult areas through Bible and Christian literature distribution, leadership training and assistance, Christian community development, prayer and presence ministry and advocacy on behalf of suffering believers.

The complete World Watch List is on the Open Doors website at <www.opendoors.org>.

Young Iranian Christians imprisoned for faith

TEHRAN, Iran (ICC) – Marzieh Amairizadeh Esmaeilabad, 30, and Maryam Rustampoor, 27, were imprisoned by Iranian officials on March 5 and incarcerated in Iran's infamous Evin prison. Inmates at this prison are tortured and face other forms of mistreatment. The two women were imprisoned because they were practicing their Christian faith, but Iranian officials insist that they were involved in "anti-government activities."

Iranian officials asked the women to post bail at the staggering amount of $400,000 (USD) in order to be released. But when Marzieh's sisters tried to pay the bail fee, the government officials refused to accept it, making clear that the Iranian officials are determined to severely punish the young Christian women.

Both women are allowed just a one-minute telephone call every day to their immediate families. Both are unwell and in need of urgent medical attention. During their last call on March 28, Marzieh said that she was suffering from an infection and a high fever. She said, "I am dying."

International Christian Concern has asked Christians around the world to pray for the women: for their release, for strength in the face of abuse and torture, and for their families. ICC is an interdenominational human rights organization dedicated to assisting and sustaining Christians who are victims of persecution and discrimination due to practicing their faith.

Irish worship band impresses Nashville

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Christian Today) – The Irish worship band Bluetree took Nashville by storm during a recent visit to that city.

The band was in Nashville for GMA Music Week: the Gospel Music Association's week-long celebration of Christian music. And the Belfast-based modern worship band had cause to celebrate, starting the week as the Best-Selling New Artist of the Year. The band's critically acclaimed album, *God of This City*, had at that time held the Number 1 spot in Christian retail sales charts in the U.S. for four consecutive weeks.

During the band's week in Nashville things got even better. Bluetree's radio single and title track to its top-selling album became a top-20 hit in multiple radio formats. The radio and chart success meant demand was high during GMA Music Week. The band conducted no less than 40 interviews.

Written during a mission trip

The album's title track "God of This City" was written by Bluetree during a mission trip and inspired by a live worship set the band did in a bar that doubles as a brothel in the red light district of Pattaya, Thailand.

"God of This City" has become a message of hope for the people of Pattaya and beyond, and is being sung in churches around the world. Singer Chris Tomlin liked it so much that he did a recording for his *Hello, Love* album, while "God of This City" has become the theme of the latest Passion project and tour.

For a limited time (still available at press time), Bluetree is giving away a free download of the song "Each Day" from the *God of This City* album. The free song can be found at <www.givmusic.com/bluetree>. The website also contains an acoustic video performance and explanation of "God of This City" by Bluetree lead vocalist/guitarist Aaron Boyd.

U.S. Presbyterians vote to keep 'fidelity and chastity' clause

NEW YORK (Christian Post) – Efforts by activists to allow sexually active gays and lesbians to serve as clergy in the Presbyterian Church (USA) have been defeated, at least in voting so far in 155 of the denomination's 173 presbyteries.

On the last Saturday of April, the 87th, 88th and 89th votes against deleting a "fidelity and chastity" provision in the PC(USA)'s constitution were tallied. That created the majority needed to overturn a highly contested vote last year.

Last summer, the denomination's General Assembly voted to remove the chastity requirement for prospective ministers, deacons and elders which required them to live in "fidelity within the covenant of marriage between and a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness."

Such a change, however, needs support from a majority of the denomination's presbyteries (equivalent to Christian Reformed classes). That support had fallen short for the fourth time in twelve years.

The final tally of this year's vote will be not be known until after all presbyteries have cast their votes. The remaining presbyteries have until June 28 to do so.

School

Vatican cardinal: Quebec school curriculum 'almost anti-Catholic'

ROME (Zenit and Catholic Culture) – The religious diversity curriculum introduced in the Quebec school system this school year is a violation of parents' rights and borders on being anti-Catholic, says the prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education.

Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski discussed Quebec's "Ethics and Religious Culture" courses earlier this spring after a conference held at Rome's Pontifical Antonianum University on "State Financing of Catholic Schools," hosted by the Acton Institute.

In September 2008, the Quebec Ministry of Education introduced the new curriculum into all public and private schools in the province. New mandatory courses replaced three previous programs: Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction, Protestant Moral and Religious Education and Moral Education, between which parents could choose for their children.

In the new program, students are taught a diversity of world religions and secular ethics.

"Talking about all religions violates the right of parents to educate their own children according to their own religion," said the Cardinal, echoing the protests of some parents in the province who say the textbooks are not ideologically neutral.

Relativism becomes anti-religious

"Talking in the same way about all religions," Cardinal Grocholewski said, "is almost like an anti-Catholic education, because this creates a certain relativism." He concluded that this approach to instruction could ultimately be anti-religious, since youth are left with the impression that each faith is a fictional narrative.

The Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops has been measured in its criticism of the Ethics and Religious Culture program. The bishops suggested that the curriculum would "promote the development of a better mutual understanding between those who have different religious or secular beliefs." They also applauded the course for highlighting the distinct role played by Catholicism in the French Canadian province's history.

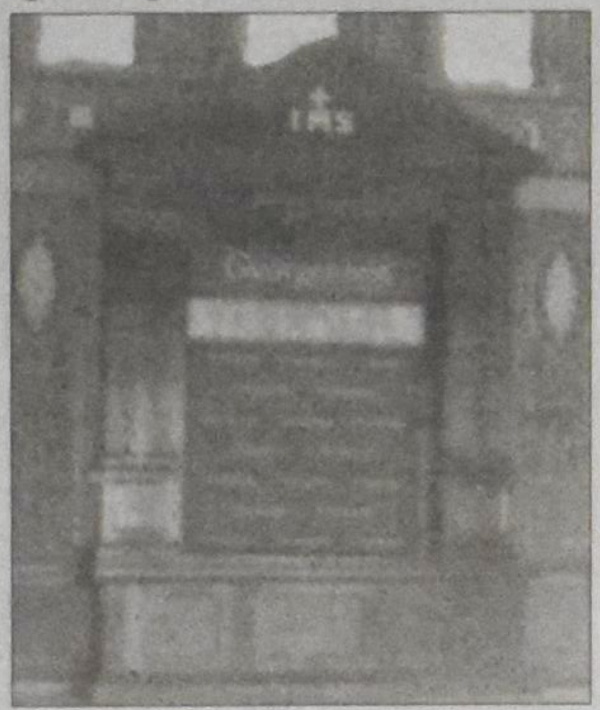
However, the bishops reaffirmed their preference for parental choice and described their stance as "critical and vigilant." The bishops further worried that teaching religion from a purely socio-cultural view could lead to a restrictive understanding of religious experience.

Some Canadian clerics, such as Cardinal Marc Ouellet of Quebec City, insist that parents should be able to exempt their children from the program for reasons of conscience. At present the provincial government has permitted no such allowances for concerned parents. Students who consistently miss Ethics and Religious Culture classes could face suspension.

Famous Jesuit school covers Christ's name before Obama speech

Marian Van Til, *with files from CNS*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Georgetown University, a prestigious Jesuit institution, says it covered over a cross and the monogram *IHS* – transliterated Greek letters standing for the name of Christ – because they were visible behind the stage where U.S. President Obama spoke at the university in April. Why cover them? The President, via a White House spokesperson, asked them to, says the university.



IHS is an historic abbreviation for Jesus' name. Ignatius of Loyola in particular adopted the monogram in his seal as general of the Society of Jesus (1541) and thus it became the emblem of his institute. The Society of Jesus is the formal name for the Jesuits, the group which also founded Georgetown.

The pediment emblazoned with *IHS* was covered with a triangular piece of black-painted plywood. "The White House wanted a simple backdrop of flags and pipe and drape for the speech, consistent with what they've done for other policy speeches," said Julie Green Bataille, associate vice president for communications at Georgetown. "Frankly, the pipe and drape wasn't high enough by itself to fully cover the IHS and cross above the GU seal and it seemed most respectful to have them covered so as not to be seen out of context."

The Obama White House did not respond to a request from CNSNews.com to comment on the covering up of Jesus' name at Gaston Hall.

P.C. capitulation?

Many students and alumni weren't impressed by the university's handling of the situation. They saw the move as an unwillingness on the university administration's part to stand up for the faith the university is founded upon, and as a politically correct capitulation to the White House. In an online discussion of the matter, several people mentioned that no such request had been made by the Bush White House when former Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice spoke in the same hall, and that Rice did not deem the cross and the *IHS* on the pediment behind her "distracting."

Obama did not mention the name of Jesus during his address. However, he did quote from Christ's Sermon on the Mount. "There is a parable at the end of the Sermon on the Mount that tells a story of two men…. 'The rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house…; it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock,'" Obama read. "We cannot rebuild this economy on the same pile of sand. We must build our house upon a rock."

That bit of biblical interpretation did not go over well with many in the audience either. "The rock he was referring to obviously isn't Christ," said one dissenter. "Does he [i.e., Obama] think he's the one we're supposed to build on?"

Palestinian academic speaks of 'life behind the headlines'

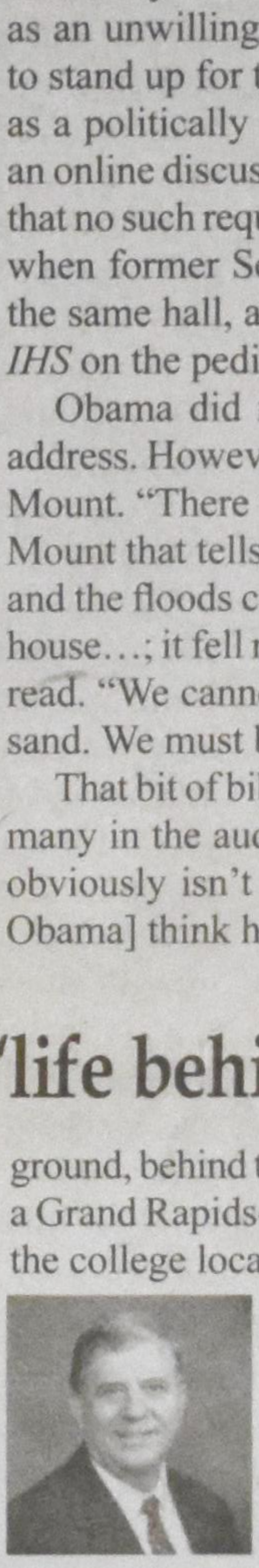
JENISON, Mich (CRCNA) – Dr. Bishara Awad, president of Bethlehem Bible College in the West Bank of Palestine, spoke at various venues in the U.S. last month about challenges to peace between Israel and Palestine.

His talk on April 16 in Jenison, Michigan, was sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church's Office of Social Justice and by the Reformed Church in America (RCA).

Awad talked about "Ways for Christians in America to Support the Church in the Holy Land" and was joined by Marlin and Sally Vis, RCA missionaries to Israel.

"Orphaned as a boy in 1948 when a stray bullet killed his father, Dr. Awad's personal journey has taken many turns. He now leads a remarkably effective educational institution bringing light into the conflict and confusion at the crossroads of the Middle East," said the CRC's promotional material.

Having lived several years in North America as a student and later as a teacher, but now back in Bethlehem, Awad has a unique perspective when he speaks about "life on the ground, behind the headlines" in Palestine, said David Adams, a Grand Rapids-area pastor who serves as a representative of the college located in the town where Christ was born.



"We are in Bethlehem in order to be the light of Christ to the community. As an interdenominational organization, we strive to help bring about Christian unity in the face of divisive pressures," says Awad on his college's website.

"We engage and serve the Muslim and Christian communities around us… We are tremendously blessed to be able to be a part of God's Kingdom in the Holy Land, and pray that His light would continue to shine from Bethlehem."

Bethlehem Bible College, he says, seeks to minister to its local community through its Al Aman Counseling Center, the Shepherd Society, Bethlehem's first public library located at the college, an English-as-a-second-language program, a tour guide program and a mass media program.

University sued for dismissing student who won't condone homosexuality

YPSILANTI, Mich. (CNA) – A lawsuit has been filed against Eastern Michigan University (EMU) alleging that school officials dismissed a student from the counseling program for not affirming homosexual behavior as morally acceptable. The Alliance Defense Fund's Center for Academic Freedom filed the suit in a U.S. District Court on behalf of student Julea Ward.

EMU requires students in its counseling program to affirm or validate homosexual behavior within the context of a counseling relationship. It also prohibits students from advising clients that they can change their homosexual behavior.

According to the ADF, Ward has never addressed homosexual behavior during counseling sessions with her clients. Nevertheless, the university initiated a disciplinary process against her. She was told she could stay in the graduate school counseling program if she agreed to undergo a "remediation" program whose purpose, according to the ADF, was to change her belief system as it concerns counseling about homosexual relationships and to conform her beliefs to the university's views.

Given the choice of voluntarily leaving the program or asking for a formal review hearing, Ward chose the hearing.

Stepping over the legal line

During the hearing, EMU faculty denigrated Ward's Christian views, says the ADF, and asked "several inappropriate and intrusive questions about her religious beliefs."

The university would not address Ward's dismissal since the case is in litigation. But Pam Young, EMU's director of communications, told WorldNetDaily, "We are a diverse campus with a strong commitment not to discriminate on the basis of gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression."

But ADF senior counsel David French says that discrimination is exactly what took place. "Christian students shouldn't be penalized for holding to their beliefs," he said. "When a public university has a prerequisite of affirming homosexual behavior as morally good in order to obtain a degree, the school is stepping over the legal line.

"Julea did the responsible thing and followed her supervising professor's advice to have the client referred to a counselor who did not have a conscience issue with the very matter to be discussed in counseling. She would have gladly counseled the client if the subject had been nearly any other matter." Legal counsel Jeremy Tedesco added, "Julea has a constitutional right not to be compelled to speak a message she disagrees with. She acted as a professional counselor should – with great concern both for her beliefs and the client."

Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

My life in the nursing home

The job was an answer to prayer. As newlyweds starting out on the farm, we needed the extra income. My two days a week as a bookkeeper weren't enough. Just when it looked as if Jack would go back to welding and I would be the primary farmer (an arrangement neither of us liked), God provided a position in the office of the local nursing home.

I had plenty of clerical experience, but knew little about the elderly. Since my parents were immigrants, I had never even met my own grandparents. Those first few days at work opened up a whole new world for me.

One afternoon a lovely old lady poked her graying head into my office. She pointed a manicured finger toward me and said, "Excuse me, dear. Have you seen my handbag? I seem to have misplaced it."

"Why no," I said. "What does it look like?"

"It's red leather, like my shoes," she said, indicating her spiffy scarlet pumps.

I remembered seeing such a handbag tucked away in a corner under the front desk. No one was at the nurses' station, so I pulled out the purse and asked, "Is this it?" The lady smiled gratefully, took her handbag and toddled out the front door.

I had barely returned to my desk when a nurse rushed down the hallway. "Elizabeth is in the parking lot!" she called to a coworker.

"Can't be," the other nurse said, "She'd never go out without her purse and I hid it where she couldn't possibly find it."

I was thankful they caught her before she wandered off the property. But my desire to help remained undiminished.

The next day an elderly gentleman plunked himself into the chair across from my desk. "Could you look up a phone number for me?" he said. He spelled out a woman's name and I searched the Harriston directory, but without success. "On John Street," he said, tapping his fingers impatiently.

I checked again. "Sorry. There's no one listed by that name. Are you sure she's in Harriston?"

He stamped his cane on the floor. "Do you think I don't know what town we're in?"

"No, of course not," I soothed. "Maybe she moved."

He stood stiffly, leaning on his cane and gave me a withering look. "Well, if she had, I'm sure she would have told her only son about it. Would your mommy just pack up and move out of town without telling you?" He shuffled out the door muttering, "It's time she comes to take me home."

By now I was catching on that things weren't always as they seemed. Or was I?

On Thursday I worked quietly on pay cheques. A husky voice interrupted the silence. "Hello, sweetie. Have you got one of those for me?"

A tall woman dressed in a lavender track suit stood by my desk. She had wavy white hair and a friendly smile.

I laughed and said, "Sure. How many would you like?"

"Just the one with my name on it, thanks," she said with a wink.

As I stood to escort the woman back to her room, (wherever that might be), the Director of Nursing appeared in the doorway. "I see you've met our laundry lady," she said. "Heidi, this is Ethel Taylor."

"Nice to meet you, Ethel," I said, extending my hand and hoping she wouldn't notice my embarrassment. "I'll have your cheque ready in a minute."

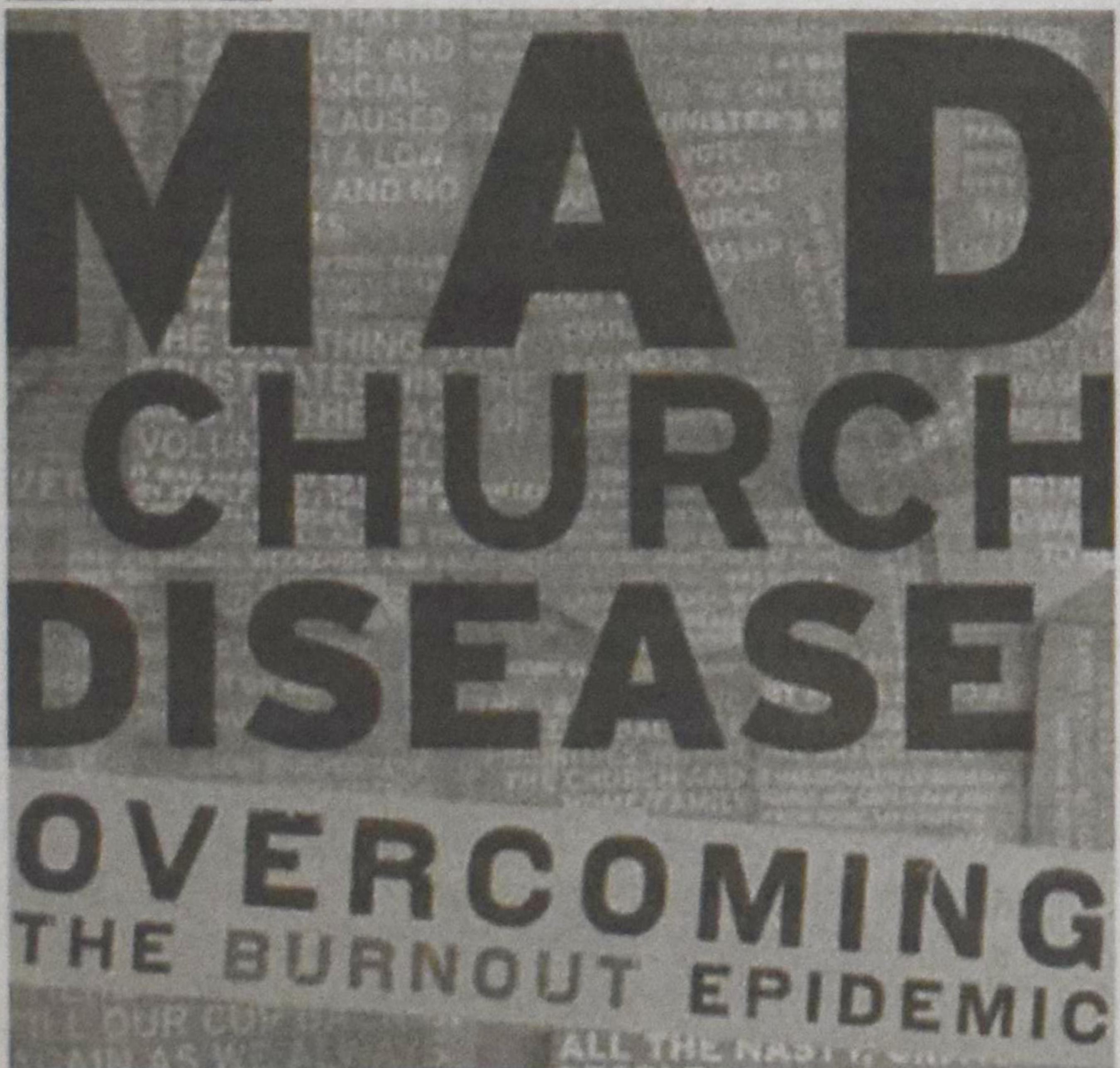
Within a couple of weeks I became quite comfortable in my new workplace. I had friends on staff. I looked forward to daily chats with residents who popped into my office to rest their feet for a few minutes, or simply to say hello. Some couldn't remember what they'd had for lunch that day, but they could regale me with vividly detailed stories from sixty years prior. Most afternoons they sang favorite hymns in the communal living room. I marveled at how much joy the music brought, and how well they remembered the words from long ago.

I had arrived at the nursing home thinking it was a place people came to die. The time I spent there taught me that it was, in fact, a place for people to *live* – in safety, security and comfort. I learned that you don't have to be old to be confused. And I happily discovered that elderly folk can be a special kind of blessing to anyone willing to invest a few minutes and a listening ear.

Heidi VanderSlikke (vanderslikke@ everus.ca) lives in Harriston, Ont.

Mad church disease

Mad Church Disease: overcoming the burnout epidemic
By Anne Jackson
(Zondervan, 2009)



Ellen Vanderwerf

Many pastors and servants of the church go into ministry assuming that if they do their best, love the people and preach the Word they will be lovingly supported and encouraged by the members of the churches they serve.

> "A healthy pastor is better able to manage unhealthy situations than a sick one is."

It is worthy of alarm to note the growing number of pastors and churches who have been unnaturally separated from each other. This can be a painful process, even if it takes place in the most orderly of ways. After investing so much time and money in their training, many pastors find themselves giving up on ministry, trying instead to prepare themselves for an entirely different career.

Building healthier pastors

Anne Jackson is a pastor's daughter. She grew up in the Baptist church in the USA. With her own eyes Anne has seen what harm some church leaders can do to their pastor and their families when they want to. The stories people share on her website (madchurchdisease.com) are heartbreaking and all too common within the organized church today.

The purpose of her book, however, is not to air out all these sad stories – though she does mention a few, mainly from her own life. A book like that would create animosity between churches and pastors. Rather, the intent is to help servants of the church equip themselves for battle against all the tricks of the evil one. In this book she focuses on the importance of pastors getting themselves strong in every way, thus lowering the risk of personal moral failings in their own lives. Her thinking is that a healthy pastor is better able to manage unhealthy situations than a sick one is, therefore it is best to get themselves as healthy as possible.

Jackson expresses this in the following passage, from page 53 of the book: "It's obvious in the arena of pastors and church leaders that there's a classic battle going on between good and evil. We know what we need to do – take care of our bodies, our minds, our souls, and our families – but we allow the idol of convenience to replace the knowledge that the Holy Spirit has installed in us."

Realities and responsibilities

This short, easy-to-read book serves as an eye-opener to the realities and risks of church ministry work. Servants of the church will learn of their responsibilities for their own well-being so that they can survive Satan's attacks against them meant to remove them from service within the corporate church.

Ellen Vanderwerf currently lives on Vancouver Island with her CRC pastor husband and their four teenaged children.

Picture books look at the big picture

Reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

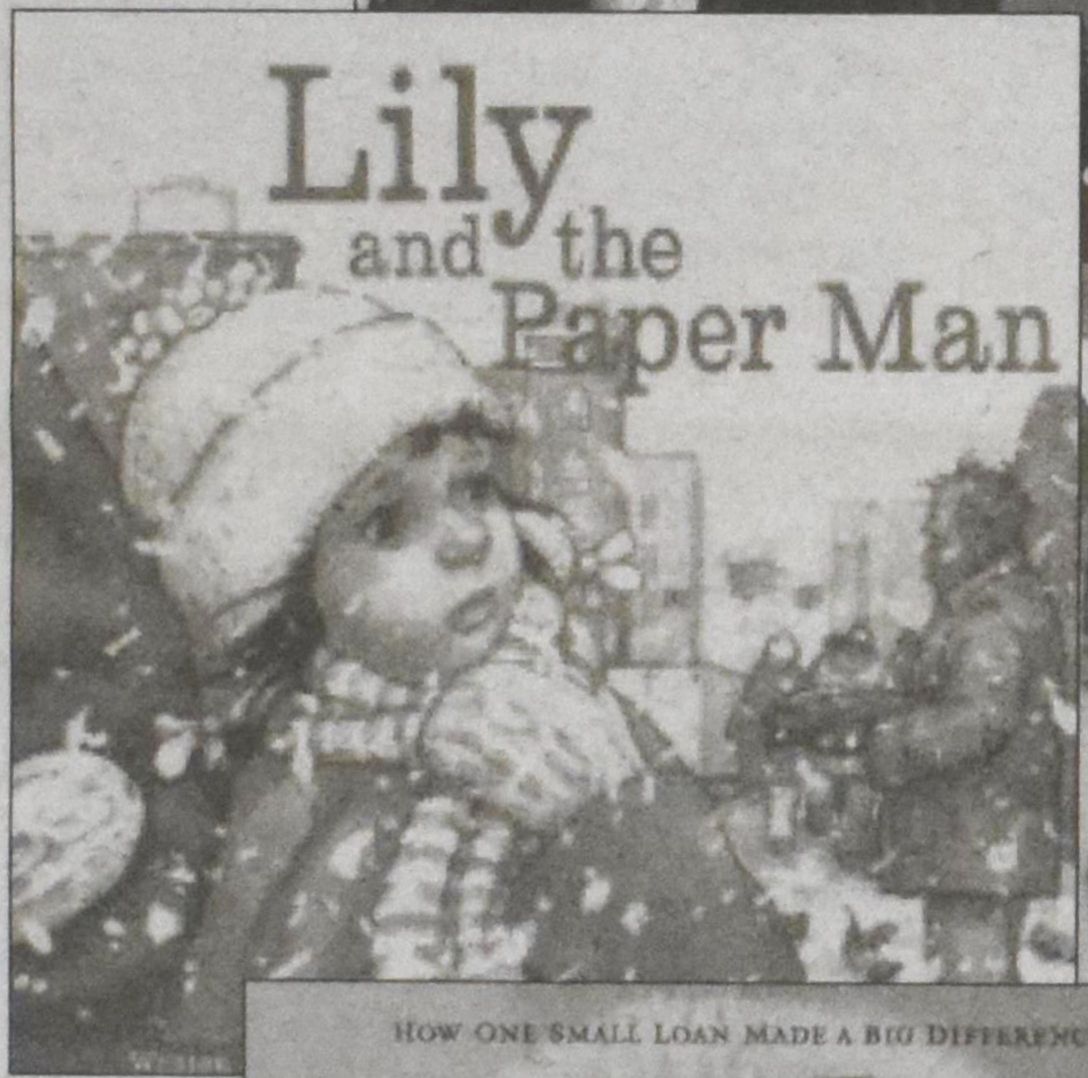
Picture books allow children to catch glimpses of worlds beyond their own reality. Homelessness, religious strife, poverty, racism and escaping one's homeland are just a few of the challenging topics kids' books deal with. Exposing your children or grandchildren to picture books of this nature will give their sense of empathy, love, justice and mercy a chance to stretch and grow.

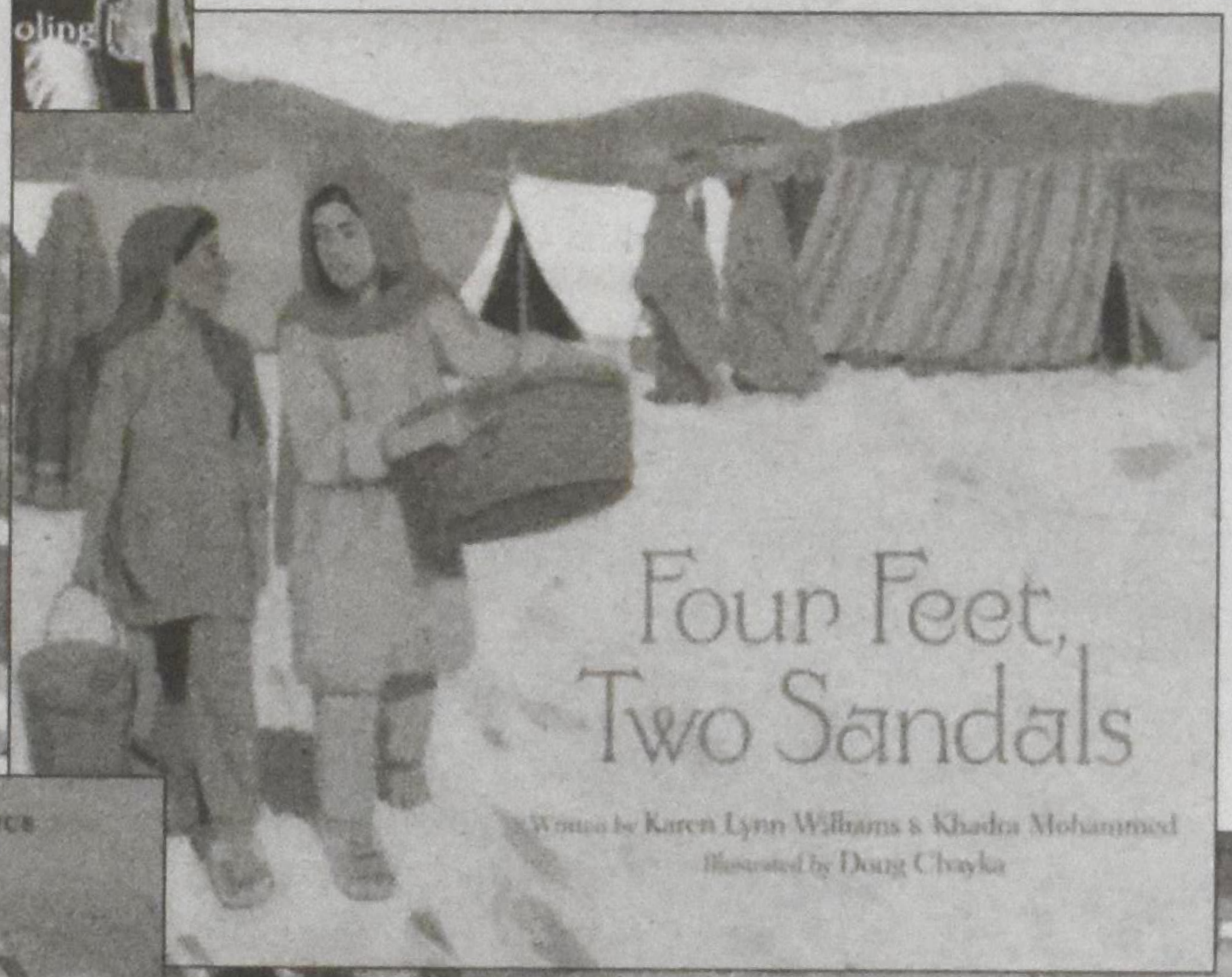
****

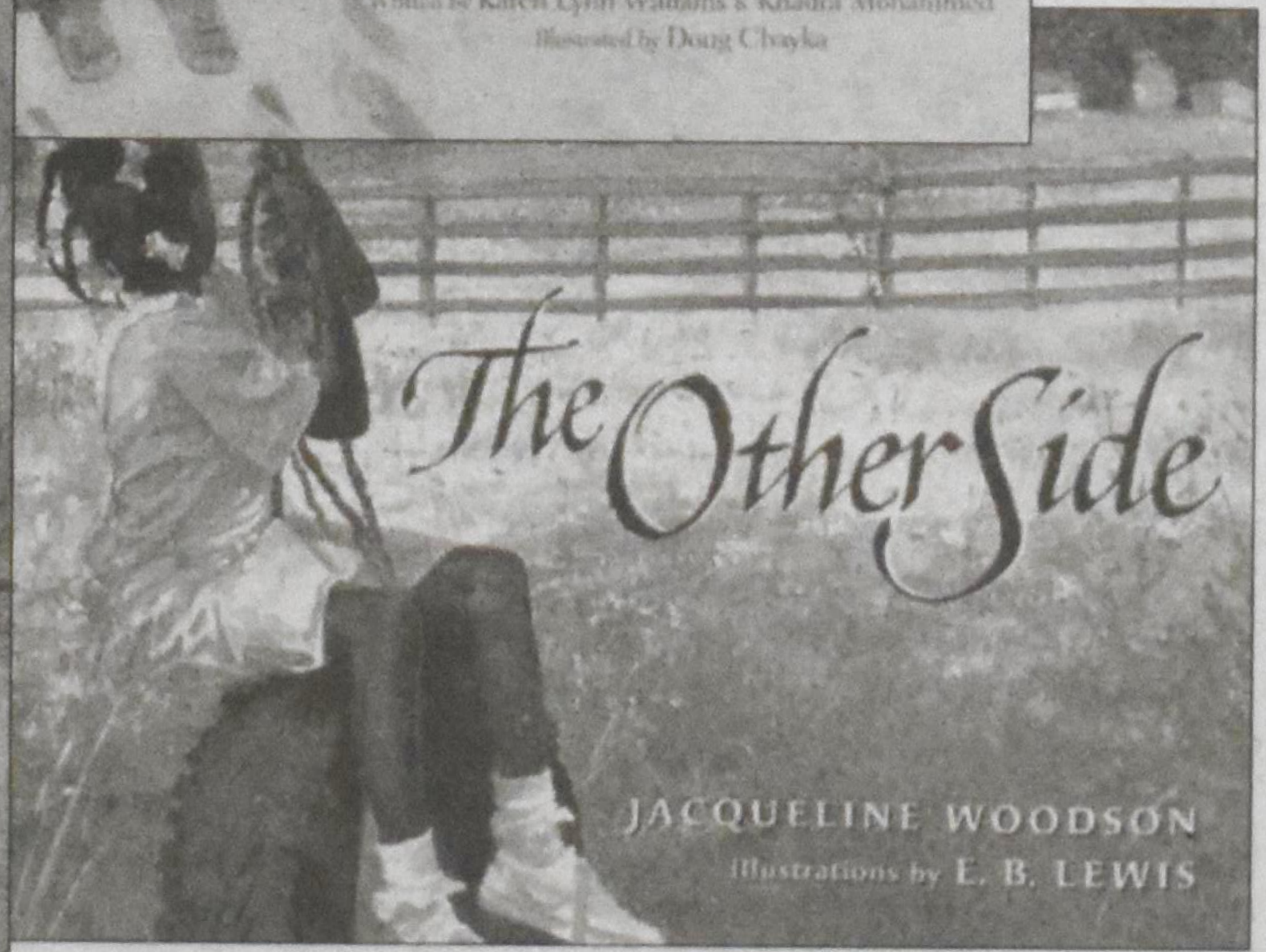
Four Feet, Two Sandals. By Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed. Illustrated by Doug Chayka (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2007)

Lina, a 10-year-old Afghani refugee living in Peshawar, a refugee camp in Pakistan, finds one sandal after relief workers throw used clothing from a truck. When she looks for the other sandal, she sees it on the foot of a girl standing nearby. Each girl walks away with one sandal. But when they meet again, Lina and Feroza decide to share the sandals, each wearing the pair on alternating days. Soon the girls become friends, sharing memories of home and their dreams for the future. When Lina's family is sponsored for resettlement in America and Feroza is left behind, the sandals become a keepsake of their friendship and a hopeful symbol that one day they will be reunited.

Four Feet, Two Sandals gives children a glimpse into life in a refugee camp, as well as a picture of the resiliency of children who live there. Doug Chayka's illustrations meaningfully juxtapose splashes of hopeful, bright colors with the earthy tones of a bleak, despairing landscape.







****

Walking to School: A Story From Northern Ireland by Eve Bunting. Illustrated by Michael Dooling (Clarion Books, 2008)

Eight-year-old Allison wonders about Protestants and Catholics, and asks herself, "Do they hate each other as much in other countries as they do here in Northern Ireland?" Her question isn't a theoretical one. It's rooted in her experience of walking through a Protestant neighborhood to reach her Catholic school. However, Allison isn't just afraid of angry Protestants. Her uncle Frank, whom she's always loved, frightens her now because she overheard him talking about attacking a Protestant man. Uncle Frank claims that Protestants are "a bad lot." But Allison wonders, "Are we a bad lot, too?" One day when Allison walks to school, a Protestant girl unexpectedly shows her kindness. Allison understands what the fighting adults refuse to grasp: "I think we could be friends, if we had the chance. I know we could. If the grown ups would let us."

Bunting's gripping story explores a complex issue in a way which children will be able to understand. Michael Dooling's stirring illustrations convey the fear and tension caused by religious strife.

****

Lily and the Paper Man by Rebecca Upjohn. Illustrated by Renne Benoit (Second Story Press, 2007)

Most days Lily enjoys walking to school with her mom. But one day she sees the Paper Man – a poor, disheveled, homeless man – selling newspapers. From then on Lily insists on taking the city bus to school because she's afraid of him. When the first snow falls, Lily forgets her fear because she wants to traipse through the snow. Then she notices how cold the Paper Man is as he weathers the elements with broken boots and light clothing. Lily decides something has to be done for him. With the help of her parents and friends, Lily warms the Paper Man's heart, as well as his freezing body.

Rebecca Upjohn's simple narrative and Renne Benoit's warm illustrations show kids that a child's compassionate actions can help alleviate suffering.

****

The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2001)

"That summer the fence that stretched through our town seemed bigger," Clover, a young African-American girl, thinks. The fence that she's referring to is the one that divides white people from black people. When Clover asks her mother why the fence exists, she replies, "Because that's the way things have always been." However, when Annie, a white girl, climbs on the fence and befriends Clover, the girls realize that fences aren't just meant for dividing people. They are also meant for sitting on together. Clover and Annie's friendship grows, and soon includes other children. In a poignant conclusion, Annie states, "Someday somebody's going to come along and knock this old fence down."

The many uses of Jacqueline Woodson's brilliantly rendered real as well as metaphorical fence are brought to life by E. B. Lewis's inviting watercolor illustrations.

****

One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference by Katie Smith Milway. Illustrated by Eugenie Fernandes (Kids Can Press, 2008)

Kojo and his mother live in a poor Ghanaian village, but the residents have set a plan in motion to overcome their poverty. Every family commits to saving some money so that, one at a time, each family can borrow all the funds to purchase an item that will help them increase their income. When Kojo's mother finally receives funds, she uses most of the cash to buy a cart to take firewood to the market. She gives the few remaining coins to Kojo, who buys a hen with them. From the money he earns by selling eggs, Kojo is soon able to buy more hens. His small business prospers, and he is able to afford school fees. *One Hen* tells the story of Kojo's success from childhood to adulthood as his initially small business grows from one hen into a large poultry operation, and becomes a blessing to his family, community, and nation.

Based on the true story of Kwabena Darko, who established Sinapi Aba (Mustard Seed) Trust, this book gives children a delightful, educational insight into how "change can happen, one person at a time."

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema is a freelance writer living in St. Catharines, ON. She recently published her first children's picture book, Monzi and Mama's Stories, *copies of which can be ordered at sonyavf55@hotmail.com.*

Story

The burning porridge

Bert Witvoet

Joey Baker was about 10 years old. He lived with his parents and two brothers and one sister on Main Street in Cattlebonka. Cattlebonka is a small village with maybe 100 people.

Joey didn't like living in a small village. Everybody knew everybody. Everybody talked about everybody, too. If you had a headache one morning, the whole village knew about it in the afternoon. If your mother burned your supper, the neighbours could smell it and they would pass on the word: "Mrs. Baker must have been watching television. She stank up the whole neighbourhood. I bet Mr. Baker and the Baker kids had nothing to eat before they went to bed." If your bike broke down, the whole village would ask if you were going to buy a new bike soon. Joey Baker did not like a small village where everybody talked about everybody. Cattlebonka was such a yackety-yack place to live. Everybody was yacking about everybody else.

One day Joey got up around nine o'clock. It was a Saturday morning. His parents had left him a note saying they had gone shopping in Hipposota, a city near Cattlebonka. They said that he could help himself to some porridge they had left on the stove. Joey took a bowl and slapped a few spoons of porridge into it. Then he went to the fridge and poured some juice over his porridge. Joey was allergic to milk so he always used apple juice for his cereal or porridge.

Next he took his bowl of porridge outside so that he could eat it sitting on the front step of his parents' house. It was a nice day. The sun was shining and Joey liked to be outside so he could hear the birds sing. Maybe his friend Mark de Vries would already be up and about. Mark lived next door to Joey.

A man passed by who was smoking a cigarette. Joey didn't know the man."It must be someone who got lost," he thought to himself. The man was finished with his cigarette so he flicked it into the Baker's front yard. Wouldn't you know it? The burning cigarette butt ended up right in Joey's porridge. Phoooom!!! the porridge started to burn. Big flames leaped up into the air and almost burned Joey's fingers. Joey threw the bowl with the burning porridge as far away as he could. Clonk! It landed in a garbage pail near the hedge that separated the Baker's front yard from that of the de Vrieses.

No sooner had the bowl disappeared into the garbage pail or Kabooom!!!! A big explosion and the garbage pail caught fire. Huge flames shot up into the air. The fire roared. Some flames went high enough to touch the neighbour's pine tree. A few seconds later, the pine tree was on fire.

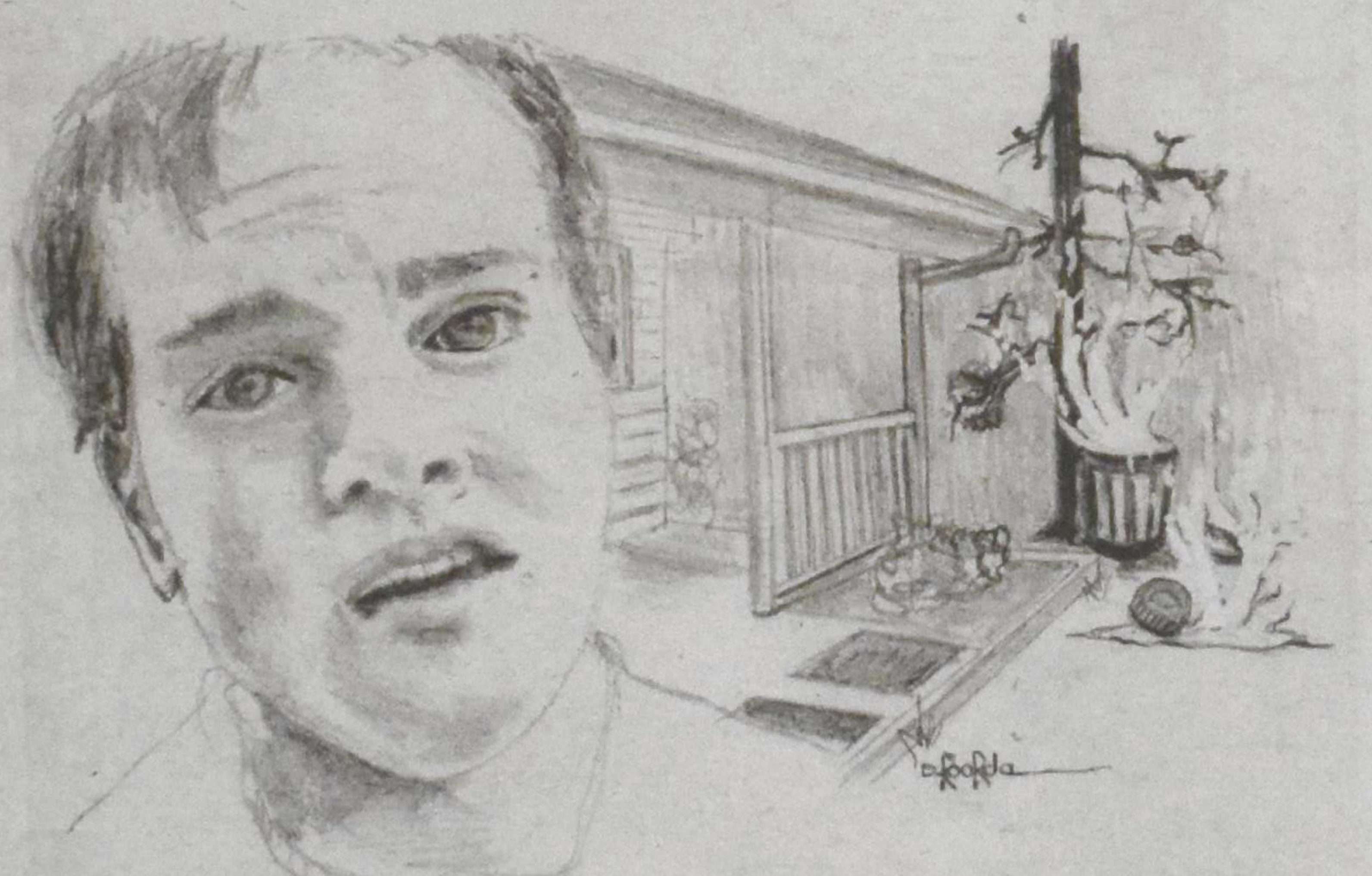
"Quick, call the fire department!" Joey shouted to the man who had thrown the cigarette butt in his porridge.

"What fire department?" the man said. "You mean Bill Barkley and his garden hose? There is no fire truck in Cattlebonka. Everybody knows that."

"Never mind," shouted Joey. "We need to put the fire out before it burns down the whole neighbourhood! Do something!"

But the man shrugged his shoulders. He was from out of town. He didn't live in Cattlebonka. This little fire was none of his business. Why should he get involved? He stepped into a little red Volkswagen he had parked in front of the Barkleys and drove away.

Joey got scared. He ran to the tap and filled a pail with water, and threw the water on the pine tree. But it didn't help very much. All he got was a lot of steam.



"Help! Somebody help!" Joey shouted.

Mark de Vries, who was cleaning his bike in his dad's workshop, heard him and came running. As soon as he saw the burning pine tree in his own front yard, he ran to the side of the house, grabbed a garden hose, turned on the tap and sprayed water all over the pine tree. After a few minutes the fire was out.

"Phew" said Mark. "That was close."

"I'll say," said Joey. "I wouldn't want your house to catch fire."

Then they both inspected the pine tree. It was a sorry sight. It looked black and skinny. All the pine needles had burned off.

"I guess that's the end of the pine tree," said Mark.

"Yeah, I guess so," said Joey sadly. He was also a bit scared. What would Mr. and Mrs. de Vries say? What would people say? Of course, the whole town of Cattlebonka would know about it in half an hour.

"What happened?" Mark asked Joey.

"It's hard to explain," said Joey. "A man threw a cigarette butt into my porridge and it caught fire. So I threw the bowl of porridge into the garbage pail. But the garbage pail had some stuff in it that caught fire, and since it stood right next to the hedge, near your pine tree, the pine tree caught fire."

As he was telling the story, Mrs. Barkley, who lived on the other side of the Baker's house, had been listening in. She had been picking up a few dead twigs in her front yard. "Humph," she snorted. "Likely story." She straightened up and marched away.

"Where is the man now?" Mark asked.

"He's gone. He took off in his little red Volkswagen. I don't even know who he is."

"Well, we better tell my Dad and Mom," said Mark.

Mark went into the house and called out to his mom and dad to come to the front yard. When they came out of the house, there stood Joey, looking sad and ashamed next to a black stick with branches.

"This is you ... you ... your pine tree," said Joey.

"You mean this used to be our pine tree," said Mr. de Vries. "What happened?"

Joey told him the story about the man and the cigarette butt and how his bowl of porridge caught fire."

"Your bowl of porridge caught what!?!" said Mr. de Vries.

"It caught fire."

"Come on, Joey, tell me the truth. What happened?"

"My bowl of porridge caught fire."

"How can that be?" said Mrs. de Vries. "Porridge can burn when it sticks to the pan but it does not go up in flames. It can't!"

Mark looked at his parents. "Joey always tells the truth, Mom and Dad. You have to believe him."

"We would like to believe him, son," said Mr. de Vries. "But the story does not make sense. How can porridge go up in flames? Have you ever seen that before, Mark?"

"Eh ... no," said Mark.

"Have you, Joey?" Joey sighed. "I guess not," he said. "But it did go up in flames this morning. I saw it with my own eyes."

"Did your father read you the story of Moses and the burning bush last night?" asked Mr. de Vries while rolling his eyes.

"No," said Joey, wondering why Mr. de Vries would ask about their Bible reading after supper.

Mr. de Vries took a look at the garbage pail. Inside he could see a whole black mess of burnt-out stuff. The pail was still hot to his touch. "Why don't you tell us the truth, Joey," he said. "Were you playing with fire in the garbage pail?"

"No, Mr. de Vries. I wasn't. Honest."

Mr. and Mrs. de Vries looked at each other and shook their head. "We'll talk with your parents when they come home," said Mrs. De Vries. "Mark, you had better come with us for now."

The three of them left Joey standing in his front yard as they disappeared into their house.

Joey didn't know what to do. He wished he could run away, get out of this stupid town where everybody talks about everything. He sat down on the front step. Nothing to do but wait for his parents, he thought. They wouldn't believe him either, of course. Who ever heard such a thing. Flames leaping from a bowl of porridge! Thinking back to what Mr. de Vries had said about Moses and the burning bush, he wondered whether God was trying to tell him something.

It didn't take long before a couple of boys rode by on their bikes. "Hey, Joey," one of them shouted. "Can I come over and roast some marshmallows over your bowl of porridge?"

Joey groaned. "Go away," he muttered.

"Hey, Joey," the other boy sneered. "Maybe you're a dragon, and that's how the porridge caught fire. Don't come too close to our house. My mom doesn't like dragons." The boys both laughed.

But Joey didn't laugh. He felt miserable. "Why is this happening to me, God?" he said quietly. "You know I am telling the truth. You know, what, God? When I grow up, I'm going to leave Cattlebonka for good. I'll look for a job in Hipposota. Who wants to live in Cattlebonka, anyway." He picked up a few stones and threw them at the Barkley's cat. "Scoot," he shouted. "Get lost. Poop on your own flowers."

While Joey was moping and muttering away, a car came up the driveway. It was his parents. They had come home from shopping.

"Hi, Joey," Mrs. Baker shouted cheerfully. "Give us a hand with the groceries, will you. I bought a lot of apple juice just for you, and you know how heavy those cartons of juice are."

Joey didn't say anything. He just stared at the ground.

"What's the matter? Joey," his dad said. "You look as if a dog peed on your shoes."

"Maybe you should ask Mr. and Mrs. de Vries what happened," Joey mumbled loud enough for his parents to hear him.

"I'll do just that," said Mr. Baker, as he jumped over the fence into the de Vries's front yard. He knocked on the front door of the house. "Whoa, what happened to your pine tree?" he said when Mr. de Vries opened the door.

"That's what I am trying to find out," said Mr. de Vries. By this time Mrs. de Vries and Mrs. Baker had joined the men. Mark, too, came out and stood next to his friend Joey. "Don't worry, Joey," he said. "I know you couldn't help it."

All of them stared at the little burnt pine tree. Then they looked at Joey. "Tell me what

happened, Joey," said Mr. Baker.

Joey scraped his throat. He told them how he had gone outside to eat his porridge on the front step, and how a man had thrown a cigarette butt into his porridge and how his porridge had caught fire, and how he had thrown the bowl away so he wouldn't burn his hands, and how the bowl fell into the garbage pail, and how the garbage pail caught fire, and how the flames had jumped up and licked at the pine tree, and how the pine tree had caught fire, and how the man had left him, and how he tried to put out the fire with a pail of water, and how Mark came with the hose and put out the fire, and that the pine tree was dead.

It was quiet for a while. Mr. and Mrs. Baker felt that Joey was telling the truth. Joey did not lie very much, and when he did lie, you could always tell. His eyes avoided looking at you. But Joey was looking at his parents and he seemed to believe what he was saying.

"How do you explain that? Joey," said Mr. de Vries.

"I can't," said Joey. "Whoever heard of apple juice catching fire."

"Apple juice?" said Mrs. Baker. "There was no apple juice in the house this morning. That's why we went shopping so early. We ran out of apple juice."

"But what was it that I put on my porridge, then?" asked Joey. "I took a carton out of the fridge that said apple juice."

"Well, let's have a look," said Mrs. Baker. She went into the house and soon came out again with an apple juice carton in her hand. "This is no apple juice," she said, while sniffing the contents. "This is gasoline!" She looked over at her husband. "Peter, what is this gasoline doing in the fridge."

"Oh, oh," said Mr. Baker. "I put some gas in an apple juice carton last night when I wanted to clean paint from my hands. I left the carton on the counter in the kitchen."

"And I must have seen that carton and put it in the fridge," said Mrs. Baker.

Both of them looked at Mr. and Mrs. de Vries. "Now we know why Joey's porridge caught fire this morning, "said Mr. Baker. "He thought it was apple juice he was pouring over his porridge, but it was gasoline. Joey is not to blame. It's really *my* fault. I'm sorry."

"And we are sorry, too," said Mr. and Mrs. de Vries. "We didn't believe Joey, and we should have. We apologize, Joey. You were telling the truth. And it wasn't your fault."

"Actually, it was the fault of the man who threw the cigarette butt into Joey's porridge," said Mark. "He has no business throwing a burning cigarette into someone's front yard."

"And he didn't even offer to help Joey," said Mr. de Vries.

Joey stood there and he smiled. "I feel a whole lot better," he said.

"But why did the garbage pail catch fire like that?" wondered Mrs. de Vries.

"I guess that's *my* fault," said Mrs. Baker. "Peter had spilled gasoline on some newspaper pages and I threw them into the garbage pail."

By this time everybody was laughing. Joey laughed the hardest. He was so relieved. It wasn't his fault after all, and he had not lied.

Mark saw two boys coming by on their bikes. He called out to them and told them what had happened.

"Why did you do that?" said Joey. "Why did you tell those snotnoses what happened? You know how the whole town of Cattlebonka will now know about it in half an hour."

"That's why I told them," said Mark. "This way they won't think you lied anymore."

"Oh," said Joey. "Maybe that's a good thing then."

"Well, John," said Mr. Baker to Mr. de Vries. "I guess I owe you a new pine tree."

"I guess you do, Peter," said Mr. de Vries.

"Is it okay if Mark comes along in an hour or so to a nursery in Hipposota?" asked Mr. Baker. "Joey and I are going to look for a really nice pine tree."

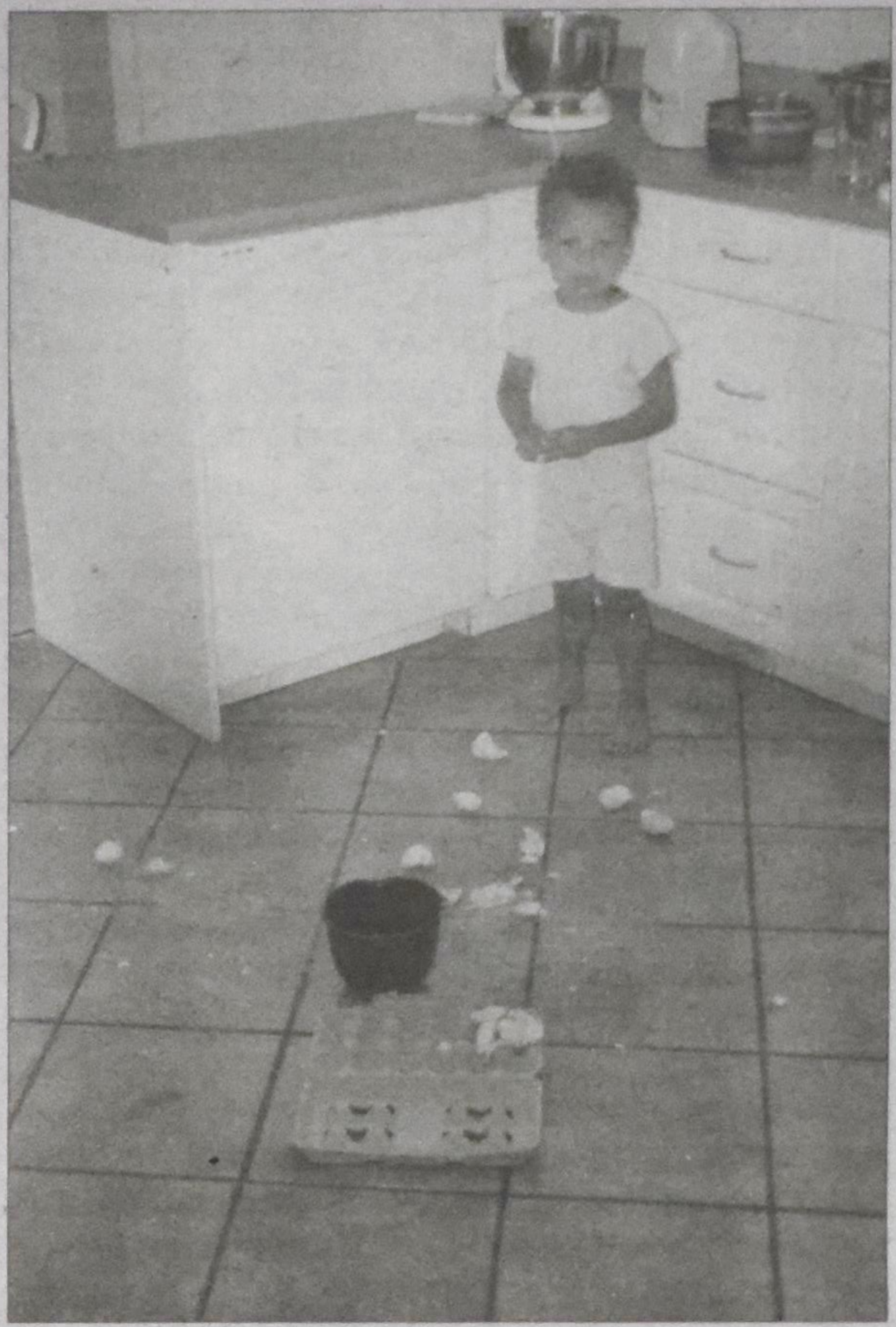
"That's fine," said Mrs. de Vries. "The boys love going to the city. But here's a few dollars so you can buy them a slurpee. I think they deserve it. Joey for telling the truth, and Mark for sticking up for his friend."

"Just make sure nobody throws a cigarette butt into your slurpee," said Mrs. Baker laughing.

Bert and Alice Witvoet live in St. Catharines, Ont., and have a life-long passion for Christian education.

Sorry means change

From Toddlers to Teens
by Denise Dykstra



This month's column topic comes from a parenting seminar I recently attended. It's not something I learned at the seminar that I want to share though; it's something I heard that I didn't agree with. Something I thought would be worthwhile to examine.

The speaker of the seminar was giving suggestions on how to deal with young kids when they misbehave. In the course of his talk he advised parents not to make their children apologize when they hurt or bother someone else. His theory was that children usually aren't sorry when they do something wrong, so when you make-them apologize you're asking them to be insincere.

Sorry is a little word that means a lot. It may start out as an empty word but I believe it's still important to teach kids to say it from an early age.

We all know that preschoolers are egocentric: everything in the world revolves around them. Teaching the art of apology helps young boys and girls realize that other people have feelings too. Pointing out when an apology is in order – after a playground shove or the grabbing of a toy – encourages empathy by showing children how others might feel in different situations.

I see self-centeredness often in three-year-old Damien. When he whacks one of his siblings, and I send him to his room, his favourite line is: "Mommy, you're making me sad." When I tell him to say sorry and explain that we apologize when we do something that hurts someone else, I attempt to shift his thinking from himself to the brother or sister he upset. My hope is that this will teach him to see cause and effect and realize that his actions have an impact on others.

Sorry is incredibly hard to say. Many adults have a hard time uttering the words. But the more we swallow our pride, be vulnerable, and give a genuine apology when appropriate, the easier it gets. By getting our children into the habit of apologizing when they're impressionable and easily shaped, we set the stage for positive future behavior. What a blessing to the relationships our kids will have down the road.

Of course, apologies in and of themselves aren't always enough. As my friend Wendy says, "Sorry means change." Along with teaching our preschoolers to apologize, it's important to teach them to try to set things right after a mistake. This may mean asking them to return the toy they grabbed or encouraging them to hug the friend they slugged. And it may mean reminding them not to repeat the offensive behavior a mere five minutes later.

The Bible demonstrates the idea of making amends in the story of Zacchaeus. When the wee little tax collector repented of his sins to Jesus, he didn't stop there. He showed he was sorry by taking action to set things right. He publicly declared: "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." (Luke 19:8)

Teaching a preschooler when to apologize and how to make up for hurting someone is a gradual process. Mastery comes only with trial and error. If your kid refuses to say sorry on a particularly stubborn day, don't turn it into a power struggle. Stop coaxing, apologize to the offended party on behalf of your child, and let your example be the educator. It's not easy; I can attest to that. I found myself sucked into a power struggle with my preschooler shortly before writing this column.

Damien came to our bed early in the morning saying he was hungry. When I didn't respond quickly enough for his liking he decided to take matters into his own hands. He got out a bowl and some eggs and started to make breakfast for himself. By the time I got up he had made a huge mess on the kitchen floor.

Frustrated, I told Damien he should have waited for me and asked him to apologize. He refused. I told him to apologize. He still refused. I demanded he apologize. Nothing. Finally it hit me: I'm digging my heels in over a mess. It's not like it's fowl play. I shouldn't let him egg me on. I gave up and took a picture instead.

It's okay to make a mistake. Everybody makes them. But if our homes are places where the gospel is not only believed but also experienced, all of us – kids included – should apologize when we slip up.

Denise Dykstra (dykstras@telus.net) is a stay-at-home mom of five kids – three biological and two adopted – ranging in age from 14 to 3. She is a freelance journalist who lives in Edmonton, Alberta

Impressions and Reflections

The Holy Catholic Church

The Liberal Artist
Brian Dijkema

If you're anything like me, your impression of the Roman Catholic Church as a youngster was one shrouded in mystery. Not mysterious in the sinister, shaded sense propagated by the likes of Dan Brown (of Da Vinci Code infamy) nor in the sense of Protestants of a few years back who placed the Roman Catholic church just this side of cult status. And no, I'm not talking about the type of cult status of Monty Python among college boys.

Rather, it was an impression maintained mainly by misunderstanding fuelled in part by surface interaction with our Catholic friends and the inability of those around us to offer the language to describe otherwise in a way that made sense to our young minds.

Catholics weren't *really* Christian. Most of them just called themselves Christian and went to church once or twice a year to ensure the safety of their souls. Those who did go to church every Sunday – the serious Catholics – were even stranger. What exactly are those crucifixes? Are they idols? Why pray to Mary when you can pray directly to God through Jesus? Why all that bowing and kneeling?

Sadly, these impressions are all the knowledge many Protestants, including Reformed Christians, have of Rome. Some, aided no doubt by our mainstream media's treatment of Catholics, have an even lower impression.

A new thought

It's high time that changed. Why? I offer a few cursory reasons:

First, we have more shared history than we do different histories. The church was together for over 1500 years before it came apart (if one neglects to consider the schism between the Eastern and Western churches). This means the bulk of the historical sources on which we draw for theology and guidance in our faith are held in common. On this note it is particularly interesting to read Calvin's Institutes with an eye towards the sources on which he pulls. Thomas Aquinas, John Chrysostom and Augustine are but three figures who feature prominently.

Second, we recite the same creeds. When we recite these things, we join with the church around the world and with the church throughout history. Remaining in the dark, or considering those who recite the creed outside of the family of Christ, is to make lies of the words uttered out of our mouths.

Third, we share a concern and the theoretical background needed to uphold the integrity and independence of social institutions, including those that teach the liberal arts from a Christian perspective (a subject dear to my heart, of course).

Fourth, we share the same concern for the poor, the weak and the dignity of all humans as creatures made in the image of God. Those who care about the treatment of the poor in this world, the sick, the mentally ill, the unborn, the weak, the aged and the oppressed will find no greater allies than among our brothers and sisters in the Catholic church. In fact, our two traditions, Reformed and Catholic, might rightly be said to possess the two strongest traditions within Christianity – at least in the realm of legal and social thought – that can take on some of the idols of our times with grace.

Finally, we must recognize that when Catholics pray, particularly with the words "thy will be done", they are seeking that the will of God, our God, be done. Nothing can be more powerful a testament to this fact than the last few words of the last column written by Fr. Richard John Neuhaus. I'll let the power of this short phrase speak for itself:

> *"The entirety of our prayer is 'Your will be done' – not as a note of resignation but of desire beyond expression."*

I say Amen! And you should too.

My intent

It's important to note that the intent of this article is not to suggest that there are not very significant differences between us. A gulf does exists, painful though it is, and it's best not repaired by covering it over with a weak tape of watered down, lowest denominator theology. True ecumenism, as has been pointed out by Pope Benedict and Hans Boersma separately, is more likely to occur when we begin by recognizing our differences and clarifying them.

So, let's stop thinking like children and reasoning like children and start to get to know our Catholic brothers and sisters, all the while keeping the words of Fr. Neuhaus (who was himself committed to seeing "Evangelicals and Catholics Together") at the forefront of our minds: "Thy will be done."

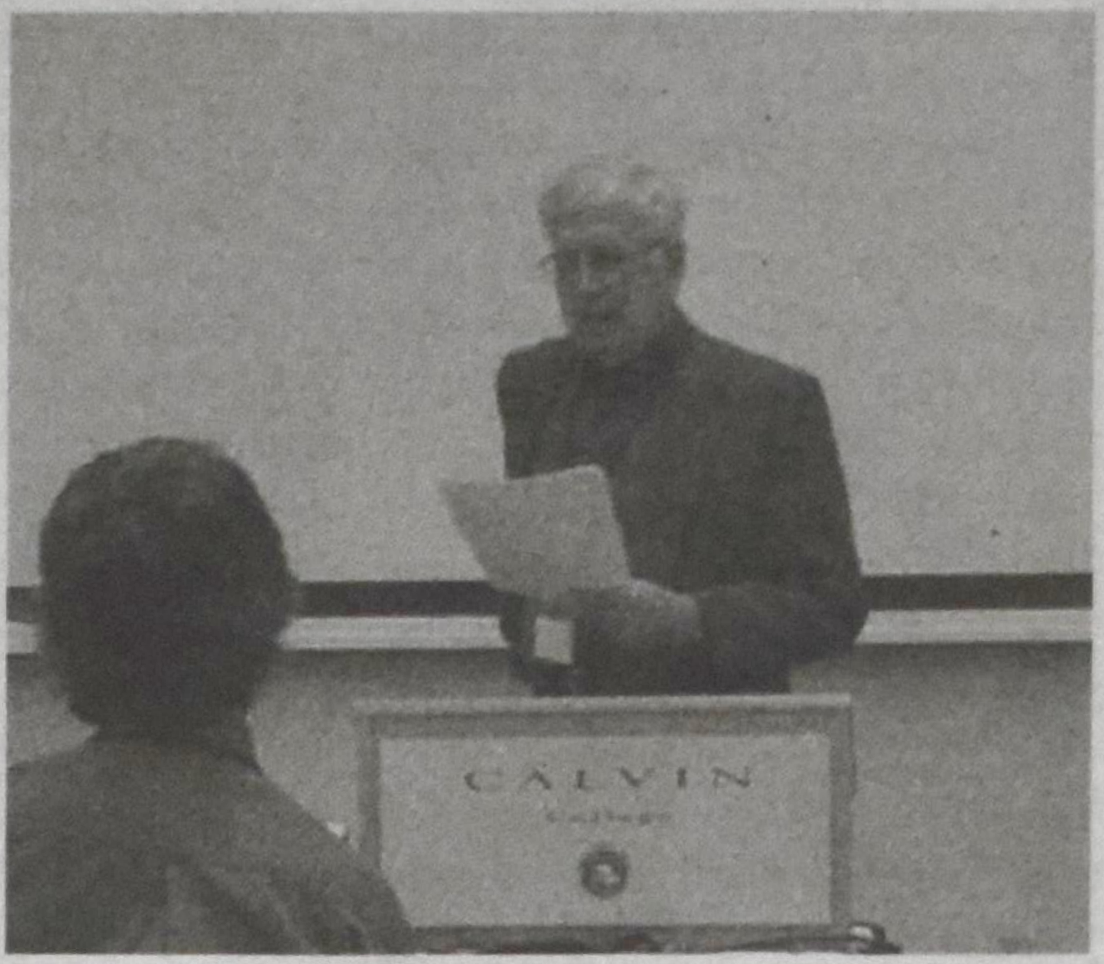
Brian Dijkema (bdijkema@gmail.com) works for the Christian Labour Association of Canada and studies political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies.

Inklings still re-enchanting the world

Peter Schuurman

"There are dragons, but no dinosaurs in Narnia, yet Narnia may be more real and true than non-fiction," said the plenary speaker Peter Schakel.

This gathering was a rare mixture of two cultures: an academic conference minus the usual pretension and a fan club meeting without the shameless hagiography. "Dinosaurs or Contemporaries" was the title of the Twelfth Annual Conference of the C.S. Lewis and the Inklings Society which was hosted at Calvin College March 26-28, 2009.



Dr. David L. Neuhouser, Mathematics professor and scholar in residence at Taylor University's Center for the Study of C. S. Lewis and friends, presents his paper entitled "George MacDonald – A Guide for our Time."

The conference featured all things Lewis and friends. The "Inklings" includes C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield and Charles Williams. This year Dorothy Day and G.K. Chesterton were given honourary Inkling status.

Besides 40 papers given and the some 60 attendees, the two-day meeting included two Narnia films and a dramatic presentation of a section of Lewis' celebrated apologetic *Mere Christianity.*

Peter Schakel, author of numerous Lewis books including most recently *Is Your Lord Large Enough?* (IVP, 2008) was one of the plenary speakers. Concerning the conference itself he said, "One of the significant aspects of the Inklings' works are that they carry over timeless truths, values and beliefs into the 21st century. It is important that they do it through the appealing vehicle of lively fiction and an engaging, readable prose style in their non-fiction works."

Sexist Narnia?

The other plenary speaker was Devin Brown (also author of numerous books on Lewis including, most recently, *Inside Prince Caspian*). His presentation defended Lewis against such critics as Philip Pullman who call his Narnia books "disparaging of women" and "blatantly racist." Brown showed convincingly the falseness of the charges by showing how they overlook all the contrary evidence, such as how sexist and racist remarks come from evil or less-than-perfect characters, which makes Lewis' stance a critique of sexism rather than a promotion of it.

In fact, Brown went so far as to say the Narnia Chronicles are quite progressive when it comes to matters of race and gender, as young female heroines shoot arrows and fight in battle, and among the vast diversity of races in the series, mixed-race marriage takes place, with one mixed-race couple even becoming King and Queen.

Movie as modern myth

One paper entitled "Lewis' Theory of Film … If He'd Had One" made the case that even though Lewis was disparaging of most films, movies may be the modern form of myth-making that uses a more experiential language than literature. On that note, a panel of experts in the end took up a critique of the two recent Narnia films. General consensus seemed to be that the first movie, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, was a better rendering than *Prince Caspian.* One panelist quoted Tolkien: "Fantasy is best left to words." *Focus on the Family*'s radio theatre production of the Narnia series was given higher marks.

Another paper offered the Canadian author Thomas Wharton as an admirer of the Inklings and a contemporary "Inkling" of sorts. His book *The Shadow of Malabron* (Doubleday, 2008) is the first in a trilogy that may inspire readers to thoughtful, playful story-making.

Undergraduates were surprisingly well-represented at the gathering, and numerous students read papers they had written. Lydia Ferraro, an undergrad from Messiah College, presented a paper on Charles Williams' novel *Descent into Hell*, highlighting his use of a concept called *co-inherence.* Co-inherence is an anti-individualist ethic in which a relational togetherness facilitates the "bearing of one another's burdens." It was mentioned that Lewis so deeply believed in the idea that he was convinced his prayers to take on his wife Joy's cancer were in fact the cause of the cancer's remission. They also caused the simultaneous exacerbation of his own osteoporosis.

Continued on p. 15

The next C. S. Lewis and Inklings Society conference will be in Oklahoma City March 2010. Watch http://www.okcu.edu/english/cslis/home.html for details to appear.

The C. S. Lewis Festival takes place in Petoskey, Michigan October 23-34, 2009. See www.cslewisfestival.org.

A new dramatic production of *The Screwtape Letters* is receiving much acclaim on Broadway and beyond. See the schedule at http://www.fpatheatre.com/screwtape

Details on an upcoming G. K. Chesterton conference in Seattle August 6-8, 2009, can be found at http://chesterton.org/rediscover/conference.html

Refugee orphans share stories of suffering and hope

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Stories tell us where people have come from and where they hope to be in the future. In order to research the life stories of refugees for my children's picture book, *Monzi and Mama's Stories*, I enlisted the help of Mary Amolo, an aid worker whom I met in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, Uganda, in March 2007 on the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's Refugee Learning Tour. Amolo asked several refugee orphans to write their stories for me. I received six haunting narratives filled with pain, sorrow, horror, and, surprisingly, hope. In this article, I've included two of the children's stories.

Nsabimana Joseph and Manzi Kabala's stories demand our attention and cry out for our response. One can't help but be overcome with sorrow at the way they and many other children have suffered because of war. Yet, even wounded children cling to dreams of a better future – a story with a happy ending. Will we pray for the healing of refugees' traumatic pasts, as well as a better future for them?

As much as possible, with only slight editing, I have retained the story-voice of each child.

****

I am called Nsabimana Joseph, a male Congolese by nationality born in 1990.

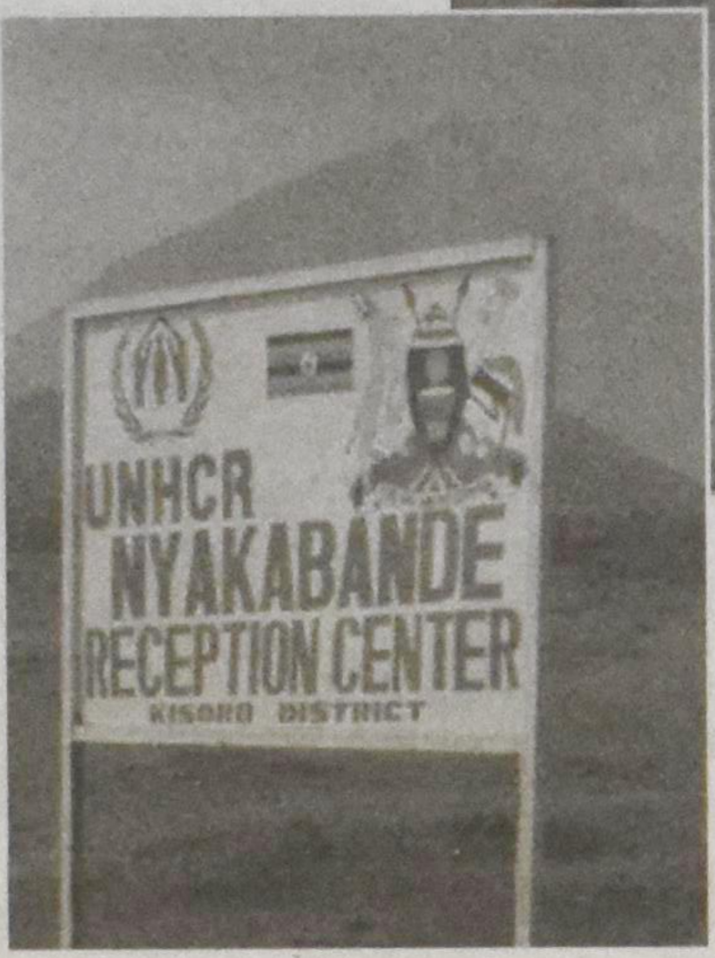
My life has been characterized by a lot of problems and sufferings, as you will read in this story. In 1994, when I was babysitting where my parents were digging, we saw soldiers coming from the forest and killed a man nearby. We ran away. As we reached at home, we found all persons who had remained at home have been killed. From there we ran to Uganda. There we suffered from diseases and, due to that, my young brother died of cholera.

From there my father decided to go back home. On the way, we got in an accident. I am the one who survived, and the rest of my family members all died in that accident. The owner of the vehicle took me to his home and I spent there almost three years.

In the year 2000, I came to realize there are other Congolese refugees in Kyangwali Settlement. Because that man [who took me in] was mistreating me, I asked him to provide transport so that I can join other refugees in Kyangwali. He did so. I traveled, but got lost. But the Red Cross members took me to a refugee law project. There I was registered and guided on how to seek asylum, and later I was brought here in Kyangwali.

Refugees at Nykabande

Refugee life



On arriving here, which was in the year 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) wrote me in the list of vulnerable as an unaccompanied minor. I could get food from UNHCR. In 2004, I suffered from heart disease. I suffered actually up to the time I was almost to die. One person, whom we shared religion with, acted as a Good Samaritan and followed me up to Mulago Hospital. I spent there one year and six months, and came back. But up to now, I am still suffering. Anytime I can collapse.

By this time, even if I go back to my country of origin, I don't know where I can go because I heard that other people thinking that we all died have grabbed my father's land.

The saying that says that God who takes care of orphans is never mistaken is the one that gives me hope for the future.

Dear brothers and sisters who are reading my story, always follow God as your guide and let his word guide you in all your life because they say: "A fly which doesn't have an adviser follows the body to the grave and remains there." I end by saying that war destroys and does not build because it leaves many dead and others orphans.

****

My name is Manzi Kabala, born in 1992. By the time I was born, life was good. But it came to be worse and unbelievable in 1997 when the war broke out in our village. Let me recall how the war disorganized my family, relatives, and neighbors.

It was on Tuesday in March 1997 when I was at home alone because my parents had gone for prayers together with my older brother and sisters. At exactly fifteen minutes to midday, I saw people running with a lot of noise. I could not understand what was happening because I was still a little boy. I thought maybe bees are chasing them. I also tried to run, but I could not manage to run as fast as they were. But God rescued my life, and I reached in the forest of Virunga National Park. Before reaching there, my brother found me on the way and he had to carry me because I was unable to run – you can imagine a child of five years.

On reaching in the forest, the information found us that our parents and sisters had been killed – that they were gathered in the church and chopped up using pangas. When I heard about this, I could not mind because I was still young. But my brother, by hearing this sad information, he hanged himself with a rope. But he did not die because the people who were with us in the forest rescued him by cutting the rope.

The situation became worse when the wild beasts could escape with some people. We suffered from hunger, disease, and other calamities, and we could think that maybe we were not created by God. Oh, how we suffered!

Back home?

We stayed in the above place for almost three months. Thereafter, we went back home. On arriving home, fear was too high, but my brother told me that we go and search for the bodies of our people. We went, but on reaching on the way, I was in front. I saw two bodies smelling. I called my brother by name: "Brother John, come and see."

"What, Kabale?" replied John.

"A smelling body," I said.

On observing, we found that they were our sisters, whom they pierced sharp pieces of trees from the private place to the head. My brother ran as fast as possible saying that he is going to kill himself. I remained there weeping, and the Red Cross found me there, and I was taken by them. That is how my family members were killed. Up to now I don't know whether my brother is still alive or not.

The Red Cross took me to Nyakabande Camp where I spent nine months. Thereafter, I was brought here to Kyangwali in 1999 as an unaccompanied minor. I got food from the UNHCR up to 2001. I joined school, but repeated P3and P5 due to problems, and now I am in P7.

I am a true orphan who knows what is good and what is bad. I have a future plan of becoming a doctor, but my worry is that I have nobody to support me with secondary education.

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema is a freelance writer living in St. Catharines, ON. She recently published her first children's picture book, Monzi and Mama's Stories, *copies of which can be ordered at sonyavf55@hotmail.com.*

Inklings *... cont'd from p. 14*

Waking Up

Brown summed up the value of the Inkling "dinosaurs" for the contemporary world. He said that Lewis in his famous sermon "The Weight of Glory" laments the disenchantment into which our over-materialistic society has fallen. It needs to be re-enchanted by visionary literature like that of the Inklings.

He made reference to the scene in Tolkien's *The Two Towers* where King Theoden has become locked in a spell of aged apathy by his evil advisor Wormtongue. The wizard Gandalf pulls him off this throne and hauls him outside where the wind and rain howl as the darkness gathers. A shaft of sunlight suddenly stabs down, and, casting down his black staff, the King abruptly straightens up. "I feel as one new-awakened," he says.

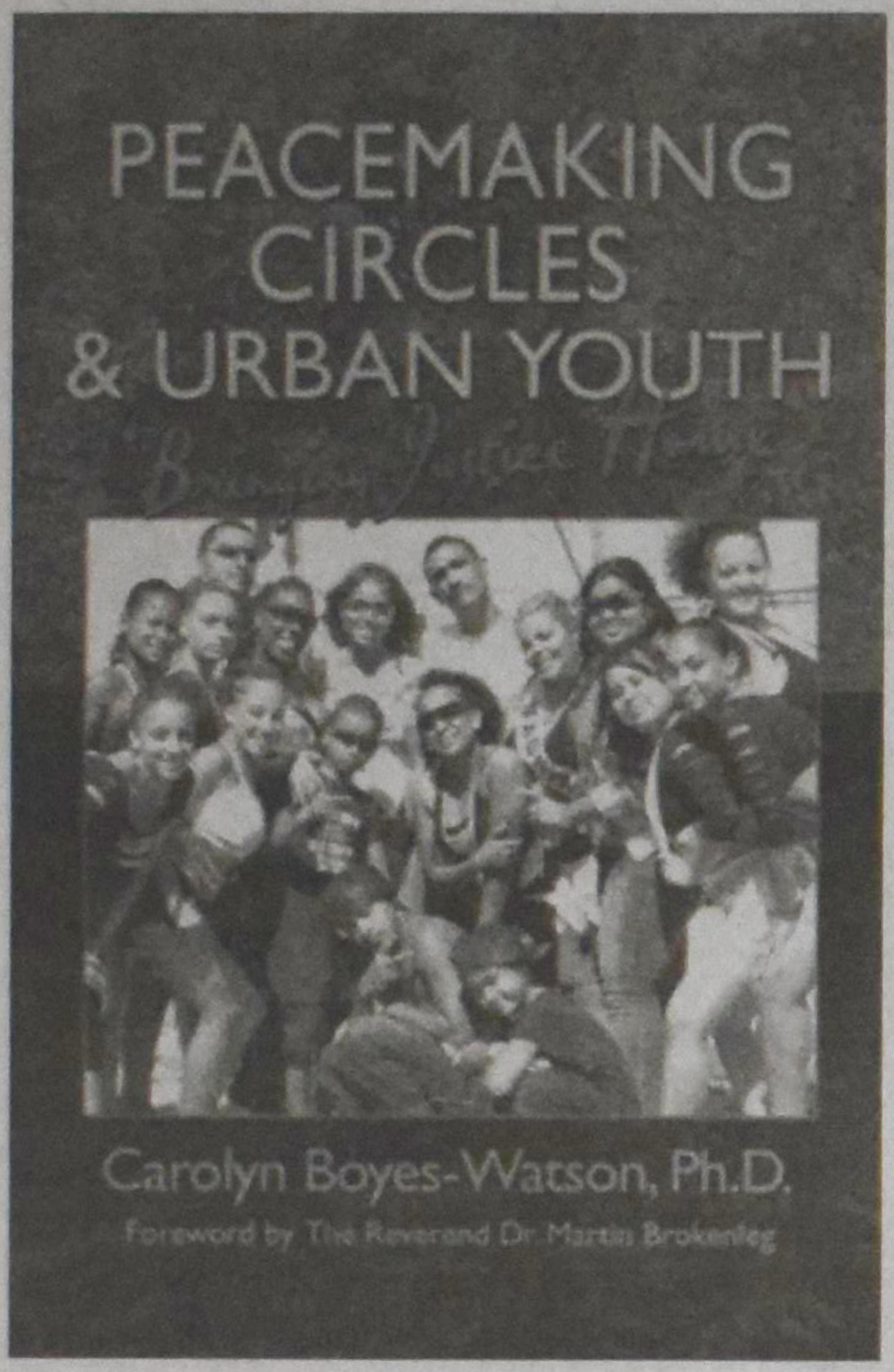
The Inklings may be aging, but they offer us images of a bright, virtuous life that will still rouse the open-hearted reader to deeper faith, hope, and love.

Janice Prewitt, one of the organizers of the conference summarized its value: "We are not losing these writers; we are keeping them relevant and alive so we can continue to appeal to new generations."

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Education Mission Leader and resides in Guelph, Ontario.

Reviews

Peacemaking circles



Peacemaking Circles & Urban Youth – Bringing Justice Home
by Carolyn Boyes-Watson, Ph.D

Rev. John de Vries, Jr.

Peacemaking Circles & Urban Youth is about transformation of lives and systems as illustrated by the ongoing 1999 "Roca" experiment. Peacemaking circles shape a strategy that builds positive relations among marginalized inner city and immigrant youth living in dangerous Boston neighborhoods. In the 1970's and 80's, "restorative justice" conferencing and circles were introduced as alternatives to imprisonment. Author and Harvard professor, Carolyn Boyes-Watson builds on these foundations. Now the reader can envisage restorative justice less as a technique and more as a "way of life." The ideas shaping the peacemaking circles are from first nations circles adapted to Western ways. Carolyn has captured "how lives and organizations change" when values, principles and peacekeeping practices are immersed into personal lives and communities.

The author skillfully lets forty-five young participants – black, Hispanic, and Asian youth as well as mid-east war survivors – tell their peacemaking circle stories. For urban youth faced with "modern monsters," circles open them to positive life goals. As the book's chapters sequentially illustrate, circles have become a strategy for youth development, a space for individual empowerment, a space for personal accountability and responsibility, and a space for healing while "opening the heart within systems."

A must read

The experiences of the youth and the author's reflections provide insights and inspiration that become a must read for anyone working with youth or adults in their neighborhood, workplace, school or church. With its consistent emphasis on values and principles, effective peacemaking circles turn the hierarchical world of systems upside down. Peacemaking circles offers hope and dignity for youth. This book moves "restorative justice" to levels beyond pioneer restorative justice victim-offender conferencing. Molly Baldwin, executive director of Roca, builds on the restorative justice thinking and practices of Howard Zehr, Judge Barry Stuart, Kate Pranis, Mark Wedge, Aan Goosh Oo of the Tagish/T'lingit Nation and others. In the transformation of youth through peacemaking circles lies the potential to heal ourselves – peacemaking circles transform persons and communities as they nurture a new way of living that facilitates glimpses of Biblical Shalom and healing in the here and now.

In Protestant circles, punishment, as a part of today's North American retributive justice, has traditionally been the means used to resolve conflicts and address crime. Peacemaking circles, or modifications thereof, are increasingly considered as one form of restorative justice practice that nurtures healing. Imprisonment neither heals nor does it address the precipitating factors that led to the conflict or crime. Locking up the offender in itself does not establish a better future. Restorative justice or "circles of redemption" focus on community engagement in the context of mutual respect for one another as image bearers of God. The circle process addresses the systemic factors that nurtured the conflict or the crime. Peacemaking circles are one restorative practice that nurtures healing for the victim, offender and the community. The growing use of this model in the Christian school, family and church equips persons to address conflict that otherwise was ignored or was addressed punitively.

Peacemaking Circles & Urban Youth whets the reader's appetite to explore restorative justice and peacemaking circles. That search is leading many persons to witness the "magic" seen in the healing of community and reconciliation of persons.

For more information, visit the website: www.livingjusticepress.org.

Rev. John de Vries, Jr. is the CRC Canadian Restorative Justice Liaison and lives in London, Ontario

American Jesus in need of saving

Brett Alan Dewing

Get ready for the scandal, coming soon to a theatre near you courtesy of Mark Millar.

Millar is one of the highest profile comic book writers today. You may know him from Marvel Comics' 2006 hit, *Civil War*, the event that led to the assassination of Captain America. Or, you may know him from another assassin, the oh-so-cleverly named Fox, as played by Angelina Jolie in the movie adaptation of *Wanted*. Such is Millar's popularity that several of his recent comics have procured movie deals before leaving the publishers.

For all their vogue, comic books remain a largely under-the-radar medium. Rarely does a comics controversy reach beyond the geek culture bubble. When they hit the silver screen, however, everyone starts commenting their talking heads off.

For Mark Millar, it began with the UK's recent banning of TV ads for the DVD release of *Wanted*, on the basis that they glorified gun violence (a topic Europeans are much stricter on than North Americans). It will continue late this year with the release of the film version of his ultra-violent *Kick-Ass*. But the real scandal will arrive in 2011. That's when Millar's most recent graphic novel, *American Jesus*, is set to arrive in theatres across the world.

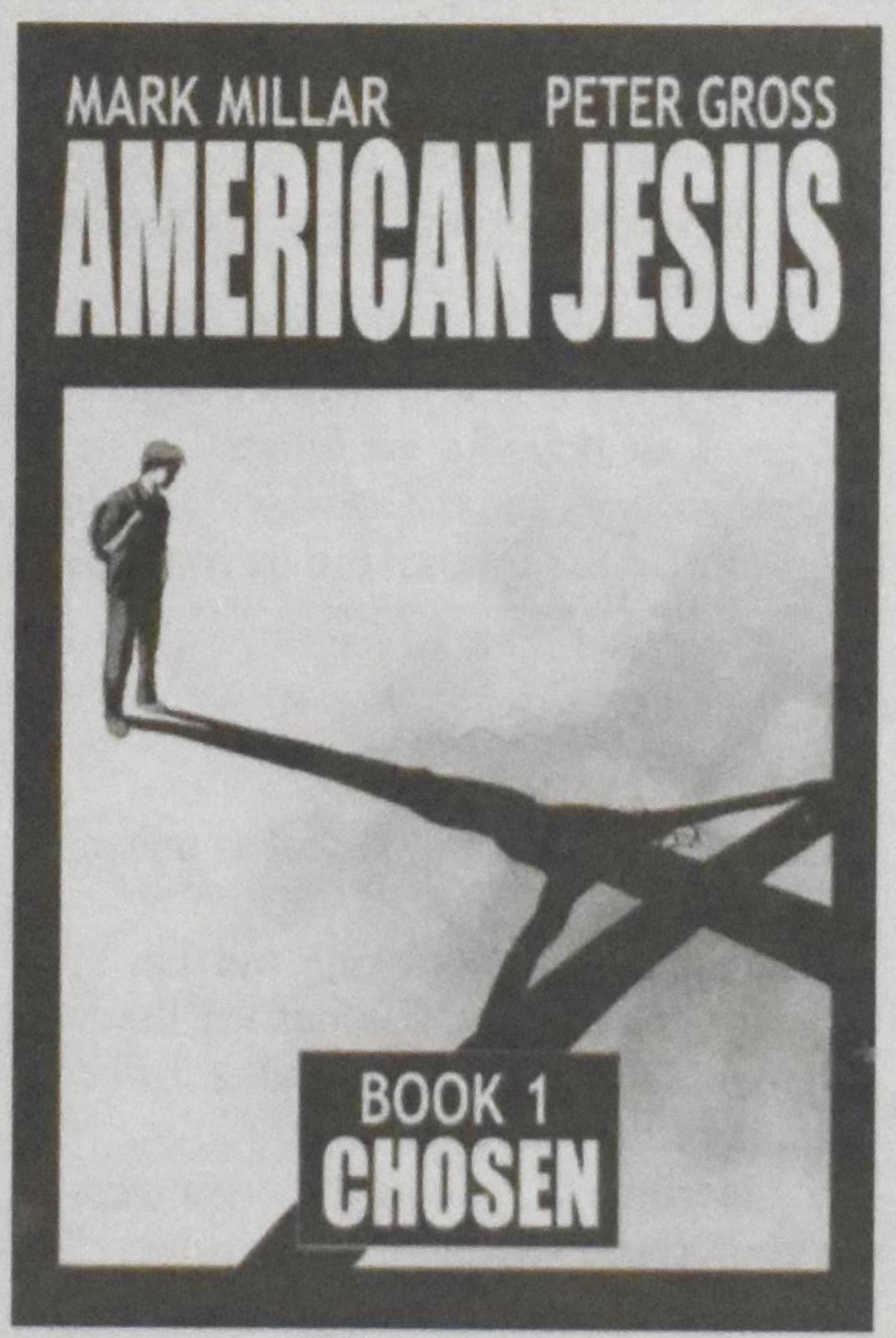
Chosen

On March 26, Image Comics published *American Jesus, Book 1: Chosen*. Weighing in at 72 pages, the book is technically a trade paperback, not a graphic novel, as it is a reprinting of Millar's work on the Dark Horse Comics' book, *Chosen*. However, Books 2 and 3 of *American Jesus* will offer the never-before-published continuation of the story. That story concerns a 12-year-old boy name Jodie Christianson, who one day learns that he is the reincarnation (here called the second coming) of Jesus Christ.

American Jesus is drawn in a simple "underground comix" style meant to invoke what one might call gritty psuedo-realism. And I believe that to be the tone Millar set out to create. The problem, however, is that in his obvious failure to grasp the nature of Christ, Millar has basically turned him into that all too familiar comics trope: a super-hero.

Jodie learns of his divinity when he is crashed into by an 18-wheeler and left unharmed. He subsequently achieves complete world knowledge, allowing him to teach at the temple of his grade school's faculty lounge. Instead of being wholly man, this so-called messiah is an indestructible human encyclopedia.

When his mother witnesses him answer obscure questions from his teachers, she tells him the secret she has thus far withheld: that he was a virgin birth prophesied by the members of her church. Far from being raised in a godly home, though, Jodie has never read the Bible at all. He smokes, does mild drugs, and enjoys pornography with his friends. His rebellious friend Maggie proves a friend and temptation.



The bad news

I hardly need go on. It should be clear at this point that instead of writing a compelling, if possibly blasphemous, comic based on the return of Christ, Millar has written a badly crafted modern retelling of the Gospels. But this is one in which God is not too godly. He's one of us, as Joan Osbourne may be pleased to learn. Just one more dirty-minded adolescent, oblivious to his inherent divinity. If anything, it comes closer to Buddhism than Christianity.

And so, if you want to be prepared for the grand religious scandal of 2011 (and you don't mind the filthy and ridiculous content), pick up your copy of *American Jesus, Book 1* today. Who knows, maybe you'll find out that *you're* a super-hero – I mean, Saviour – too.

Quote from book: (nurse speaks to Jodie)

"You really ain't got clue one about any of this, have you? It hasn't even occurred to you just who you even are, yet, huh? Boy, walking away from a burning truck's the least of what you're capable of doing, Jodie Christianson. You got powers and abilities like no one's ever seen before and these gifts are all gonna start becoming obvious over the coming weeks and months."

Brett Alan Dewing is co-editor of Christian Courier.

Addiction and Depression

Facebook ate my brain

A few months ago, my friend Adam (not his real name) went on a spiritual retreat. He rented a cabin in the woods and spent a few weeks in isolation with no cell phone, no television, and no Internet.

The last one was tough for him. I've known him for 20 years, and Adam has always been a gadget lover. Even though he's middle-aged, he usually owns the latest online game before most of the kids on the block. He's the first to join the newest social networking site. He updates his Facebook status three times a day.

But when Adam unplugged, something remarkable happened. He was able to concentrate again.

He said to me: "Lloyd, it was the strangest thing. Suddenly I could read books from cover to cover. I could form whole thoughts and write in complete sentences. It was like my brain woke up."

I understand where Adam is coming from. I own a Blackberry. When it goes missing, I find myself crying out like Gollum that my precious is lost. I don't bother to remember little things anymore – like phone numbers, or birthdays – because my Blackberry does it for me. There have been times when I've wanted to throw it into Lake Ontario (the aquatic equivalent of Mount Doom, I guess) but for some reason, I just can't.

No, I am not addicted!

Somewhere along the line, my Blackberry became part of me, and now, I can't let it go. In fact, there's a growing body of scientific research that suggests our brains – even the brains of adults – are actually being "rewired" by all our electronic and online activity.

It's long been thought that people lose the ability to learn and absorb new information as we age. However, new research has shown that our brains are actually far more "plastic" than previously thought. Neurobiologists have discovered that using Google, playing online games and using social networking sites – like Facebook – stimulates the reward centres of the brain, effectively "rewiring" them.

Scientists tell us that video games, for example, can sharpen visual acuity, improve performance in special relations tests and improve people's ability to make decisions quickly.

What scientists can't agree on, however, is if any of this is a good thing.

A recent article in the *Atlantic* by Nicholas Carr entitled "Is Google Making Us Stupid," concluded that while Web use could help us make faster decisions, it doesn't necessarily help us make better decisions.

Carr's article was panned – especially by people who make their living on the Web. But the anecdotal evidence is piling up: computers are changing us. Changing the way we think, the way we interact and the way we respond to one another and our world.

According to one study, North Americans are spending eight hours a day in front of one screen or another. That's one third of our lives. That time has to come from somewhere. It's time we're not spending speaking to one another, face-to-face. That's time we're not spending reading books, or getting outside, or playing with our children.

And it's time that we're not spending with God, either.

I have seen people pull out their Blackberries at church. And I sometimes wonder if it's only a matter of time before I succumb, too.

Way back in 1934, TS Eliot saw the spiritual challenge of technology clearly when he wrote:

The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.

All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to GOD.
Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to the Dust.

For people like Adam, unplugging from Facebook, and the Web, and all the electronic devices that clutter our lives, is a way of finding, once more, the life we have lost in living so many hours online.

And of drawing nearer, once again, to God.

Lloyd rang (lloyd.rang@rogers.com) is a member of Rehoboth CRC in Bowmanville, Ontario. His first published piece of writing was a short story in Calvinist Contact *when he was 12 years old.*

Breakdown

More Than a Degree
Lindsay Walton

For almost an hour I had been sitting in the dark, unfinished basement between a dusty set of weights and three bikes, just staring at the cordless phone in my hands trying to find the courage to call for help. It was my third year, mid-February, and my worst nightmares were coming true.

Mental illness runs in my family, and a little ghost in the back of my mind was whispering you're going crazy. My concentration was beginning to slip. My vision was blurring in class, and I was missing parts of the lecture. I was anxious. My heart was pounding a good deal of the time and my body seemed to be taking over, making the sudden decision to turn and leave a group of people because I just had to get out of there. My mind was shrinking into itself, shying away from family and friends, leaving me quiet and without words. My best friend, not understanding what was happening, endured a lot of silent lunches, looking at me and wondering. When my Dad came for a visit he asked me what was happening to his little girl. I didn't have an answer. I had no words.

I was panicking inside nearly 24/7, crying at night, and wondering when the final blow would hit: the point at which I would lose my mind, my friends, my future. I had one lifeline I could think of: a small green piece of paper pinned on to our dorm's noteboard that had the number for the counseling services available through the school. And so there I was, sitting at the bottom of the basement stairs with the paper and the phone, hating myself, hating that by calling I had to admit that something was wrong, hating that I couldn't dial the numbers.

I did manage to call and to schedule a meeting. I had a few sessions and took the counselor's advice to see my family doctor. My doctor was the one who gave me some peace. It turns out that late nights, packaged foods and procrastination aren't good for you. My body was completely out of whack from so much time spent sitting at desks, trying to eat through my stress, and hunching over my computer. Taking my doctor's advice to change my eating and hit up the school gym made a huge difference. A chiropractor also helped to "get my head screwed back on straight" after all my slouching had pinched some nerves and created headaches, which only further reduced my ability to concentrate.

With a B.A. in my back pocket, I think the most important things I learned in university are to not fear the bridges I might cross in life, but to live my life and cross the bridges only when and if I come to them. Second, I learned that a friend who is willing to eat grilled cheese sandwiches in silence until you have words to say again is the most precious kind of friend you could ever find.

Lindsay Walton is a graduate of Redeemer University College '03 and the owner of Open Door Development, a team-building and high-ropes training company.

How can you benefit charity AND your family?

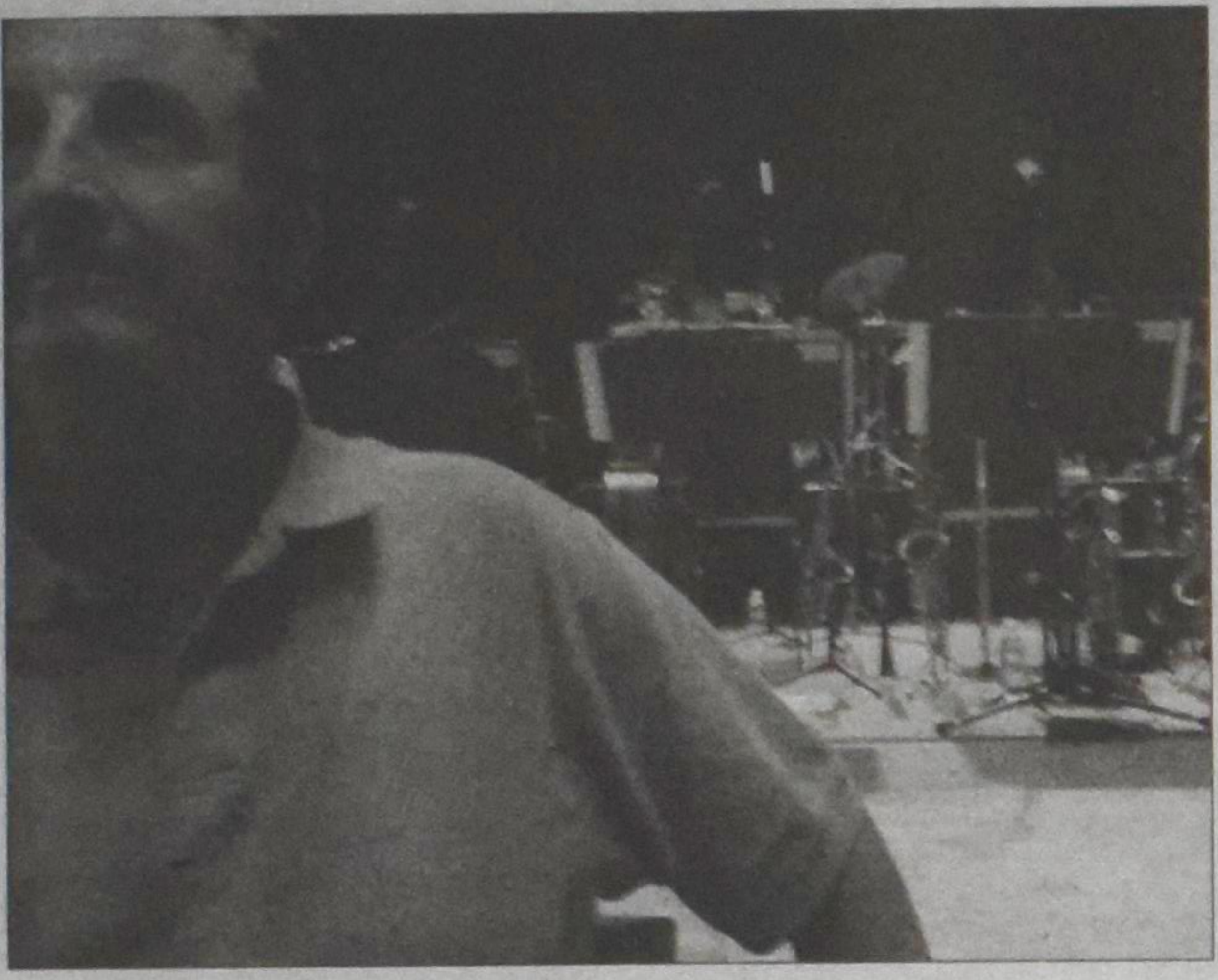
CSS offers advice on many ways to
benefit charity and still benefit your family.
Confidential visits made across Canada.

Connecting Donors, Charities & Ministries

Christian Stewardship Services
1-800-267-8890 | admin@csservices.ca
www.csservices.ca

valentine
A Division of Merit Vacations
Air Transat now more legroom
Amsterdam from $299.00
Taxes and service fees extra
Call us for **car rental** rates and **OAD tours**.
Holland America Alaska **cruise specials**
Escorted tours
Mississauga 905-890-5333 or 1-800-268-6144
London 519-472-2700 or 1-800-265-1141
TICO Registration #4499356

Missed already: the unusual life of *Crux* founder Pat Paas



John Groen and John Schuurman

Patrick Paas, a former minister in the Christian Reformed Church, died quite suddenly on the morning of February 27, 2009. Pat was a fascinating man who has left a significant impression on all who knew him. Although Pat left the ordained ministry and ultimately his membership in the Christian Reformed Church, his unique story is inspiring.

Though born and reared in a strong Roman Catholic home, Pat quit going to church when he was in junior high. Soon after high school he left home and joined the circus, becoming what is known as a "carni." A carni is a roustabout who travels to county fairs, rodeos and circuses with carnival rides. It is a very rough life, and only the roughest people survive in it. Pat loved it.

A new direction

In 1979, Pat became a committed Christian through the agency of a television evangelist. Pat responded to the telecast with a phone call to the number on the screen. After praying and committing his life to the Lord, it was not long until Pat left the life of a carni.

Pat met Jocelyn Schneider, another new Christian, shortly after. In something like a whirlwind, they fell in love, became engaged and were married. In August of 1980 they said their vows to each other in Christ.

Attending the church in which they were married was Dr. William Shell, a professor at Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Shell saw in Pat an able and eager student of the Bible and so he steered Pat to Reformed Bible College.

At RBC, Pat's professors saw what he could do with a Bible in his hands and encouraged him to enroll in Calvin Theological Seminary. He came to CTS in the fall of 1984, where many quickly grew to appreciate the uniqueness of experience and enthusiasm that Pat brought to the seminary and would surely bring to the Christian Reformed Church.

Inimitable

Pat loved the world in the way I imagine God loves the world. He had a deep appreciation for God's grace that came from living so long without God, then finally waking up to realize God loved him and wanted him to share God's love with others. Pat keenly desired to understand what God had done for the world through Jesus and then bring that understanding to the world. He worked hard at both. He especially appreciated the writings of the Apostle Paul, because of Paul's calling to bring the Gospel of Christ to the world. Pat brought Paul's message of Jesus Christ to people in a way they could understand.

We both met Pat at Calvin Seminary. He joined John Groen as co-manager of the Seminary Bookstore and joined John Schuurman at the ping-pong table. Both friendships flourished till Pat's death. We could say that the genesis of *Crux Books* lies in Pat's experience at the Seminary Bookstore. Pat's infectious laugh could bring a smile to any face. This laughter, when combined with a discussion of the Gospel, compelled you to listen and consider what it was that made Pat tick.

Challenging ministry

In 1987, Pat graduated and took a call to begin a multi-ethnic ministry in Toronto, Ontario. Then there was a dark period. After about eight years of heroic and innovative ministry, which produced a lot of fruit but for which adequate help and encouragement came at the wrong times and wrong places, Pat burnt out. For physical, emotional and spiritual reasons, he felt he had to give up church planting work – an all too common reality for people who try to do what he was doing.

Pat then began work on an advanced theological degree at Wycliffe College, an Anglican Seminary on the University of Toronto campus. After seeing the required reading lists for his courses, Pat asked Christian publishing contacts in Grand Rapids to send him some books. He saw the need for a good theological bookstore in Toronto, so Pat procured a closet from Wycliffe to start one. From those very humble beginnings came the birth of *Crux Books*.

Following his death, *The National Post* ran an article on Pat. Inside Crux is several thousand square feet of organized sprawl," it notes, "offering books on most every aspect of Christianity, from prayer to spirituality, from history to bibles and from writings of the saints, the popes, and the theological giants of today and years gone by. Protestant and Catholic writers get equal billing: C.S. Lewis sits comfortably with Joseph Ratzinger; John Calvin keeps company with Saint Teresa of Avila and Thomas Merton."

Every tribe

When Pat gave up church planting, he also gave up ordination in the CRC. He began worshipping at St. Michael's Cathedral. In the year before his death, however, he began again doing what he loved most: teaching the Bible, specifically the epistles of the Apostle Paul, to members at St. Michael's and anyone else interested.

Gospel ministry in the New Testament era is about enfolding all nations in Christ. The very large crowd that assembled at St. Michael's for Pat's funeral was especially noteworthy for its diversity of race, tongue and dress. That crowd was an emblem of what the Christian Reformed Church longs to see, of what the New Testament Church looks like and that for which Christ died and rose again.

John Groen is a Christian Reformed pastor in Ann Arbor, Michigan who has previously served in Richmond Hill and Trenton in Ontario. You can access the National Post *story on Pat at John's blog located at www.aacrc.org/groenblog/. John Schuurman is also a CRC pastor, in Wheaton, Illinois.*

No explanation for suffering

My window seat
Mendelt Hoekstra

For the past two months I have been a part of a grief group. The organization that holds the group is called COPING – *Caring for Other People IN Grief.* It is a bereavement support group whose mission is to companion others who have lost someone through death.

The group consists of six people. All the participants are in their thirties. I am the only male in the group. We talk about different aspects of grief. We talk about the myths and the truths of grief. We talk about the dimensions of grief. We share our stories. We share our grief. We share each other's grief. And we have the honour of learning about the participants loved ones that have died.

We are virtual strangers yet have an immediate bond to one another because we are a part of this club. Not a club that meets every week for an eight-week course, but because we are a part of the "suffering" club.

When I didn't have any children, I had no idea what it was like to be a part of a "parent" club. Because I am not a greenhouse operator, I have no idea what it is like to be a part of that society. I don't know what it is like growing up as an only child. I don't know what it feels like to be a professional athlete. Because I have not given birth, I do not have any idea what it is like to go through that process.

But because the six of us in this group have suffered, we have an immediate bond. It is similar when you go to a place away from home, and tell someone there what town you are from and during your conversation you realize that you both know someone. That's how you find a connection and have that bond.

The people in the group share stories about loved ones that have died. We share stories from our grief, some funny and some sadly piercing. We share our joys regarding the support we receive from others. We share our frustrations with being with people who don't understand the roller coaster of emotions that grief is bound to bring.

And every once in a while, one of us will say something that causes the group to wonder why we suffer and why there is death, specifically death that we feel is premature.

Nicolas Wolterstorff, in his book *Lament for a Son,* addresses the question of why we must suffer.

"The Bible speaks of God over-coming death.... God is appalled by death.... I cannot fit it all together by saying 'He did it,' but neither can I do so by saying, 'There was nothing He could do about it.' I cannot fit it together at all. I can only, with Job, endure. I do not know why God did not prevent Eric's [Marisa's] death.... I have no explanation. I can do nothing else than endure in the face of this deepest and most painful of mysteries. I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I also believe that my son's [wife's] life was cut off in its prime. I cannot fit these pieces together. I am at a loss. I have read the theodicies produced to justify the ways of God to man. I find them unconvincing. To the most agonizing question I have ever asked I do not know the answer. I do not know why God would watch him [her] die. I do not know why God would watch me wounded.... I am not angry, but baffled and hurt. My wound is an unanswered question. The wounds of all humanity are an unanswered question."

It is a holy experience to share intimate moments with others during grief. It shows again one of the reasons why people need a listening ear. It is one of the reasons why people need organizations like COPING. It is one of the reasons why people need a community. And most importantly, it is why people need Jesus.

Mendelt Hoekstra (mendelt.hoekstra@gmail.com) is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives in Vineland, ON with his three children.

Business Directory

Elim Investment Opportunities

Bonds
Available @ Prime

Promissory Notes
Available @ Prime plus1%

This is not to be construed as an offer to solicit investments and no investment can be made until the Investor has received an Information Statement issued by Elim Housing Society.

Established by the Elim Housing Society in 1995, Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Based and operated on Christian principles, Elim's vision is to provide various levels of quality care for seniors.

Today, over 400 people call Elim home and are able to enjoy the benefits of living within a caring Christian retirement community. As part of Elim's ongoing successful financial strategy, we offer a variety of investment opportunities. Our rates are determined by the Royal Bank of Canada's prime rate.

We currently offer Royal Bank of Canada's prime plus 1% (not to exceed 7%)

On April 27, 2009 Elim Investments were accruing interest at 3.5%

For more information regarding investment with Elim Village, contact Terry-Lynn Dryfhout at tld@elimvillage.com or call 604.583.3546 Ext 4031
Visit our website at www.ElimVillage.com

ELIM Village

A Christian Retirement Community

PAUL'S JOURNEY'S
Interested in following the footsteps of the apostle Paul?
TRAVEL TO GREECE & TURKEY
see:
Athens, Corinth, Thessalonika, Ephesus, Patmos, Philippi, Istanbul, Dikili, Pergamon, Delpi, Kalambaka and Meteora

12 day tour departing Nov.2 to Nov 13

For more Information please call Grace Visscher at
Christian Guided Tours
1-800 -811-2388 BC reg 25414

Advertising information can be found on our website at
www.christiancourier.ca email: ads@christiancourier.ca
We at Christian Courier thank all our advertisers. They help make the paper possible.
Please support our Advertisers

The sign of quality!
SCHRÖDER® FURNITURE Canada Ltd.

Do you have problems getting out of your existing furniture?

Is your sofa wearing soft?

Our Coil Spring Constuction gives you a lifetime of

pain free comfort

At Schroder furniture you can find exceptional **Quality** and **long lasting** Seating Comfort.

Come and visit us at
2140 Dunwin Dr.
Mississauga, Ontario
905-828-9511
www.schroderfurniture.com

BUSINESS AND SERVICE DIRECTORY

Free Estimates
DYKSTRA BROS. ROOFING
St. Catharines: (905) 646-0199
Beamsville: (905) 563-7374
Burlington: (905) 634-6978
Email: info@dykstrabros.com
Website: dykstrabros.com

Re/Max Escarpment Realty Inc.

Mark Nyman
370 Wilson St. E, Unit #11
Ancaster, ON L9G 4S4
905-304-3303
Email: marknyman@remaxescarpment.com
Websitte: www.marknyman.com

Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA)
Now available.
Call for an application.
CRC Extension Fund
416-461-1207

MERRITT FUNERAL HOME
287 Station St.
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Serving Families for 4 Generations
Director: **Thomas C Merritt**
Fax 905-957-1371 Ph: **905-957-7031**
Website: www.merritt-fh.com FSAC

Winter Bookkeeping & Tax Service
4184 Mountain St.
PO. Box 844
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0
Ph: 905-563-4471
Fax: 905-563-4696
Email: wbts@bellnet.ca

MEESTER INSURANCE
Smithville, Ont.
Phone:
905-957-2333
or
1-800-465-8256
www.meesterinsurance.com
MEESTER INSURANCE CENTRE — AGRI-BUSINESS SPECIALIST

JERRY'S AUTO BODY (Beamsville) Inc.
Serving Beamsville and area since 1969
•Complete Collision Repairs
•Quality Refinishing
Jerry Gerritsen 5529 Regional Rd. #81
Alan Gerritsen Beamsville ON L0R 1B3
Phone/Fax: **905-563-7702**

Digital Art & Graphics Inc.
DESIGN • PRINT • IMAGING
578 Upper James St.
Hamilton, ON L9C 2Y6
For all your printing needs
Call Brian or Kathie Bezemer at:
1-800-247-0155 or **905-574-0822**
Email: bezemer@digitalartandgraphics.com

BAKKER
BARRISTER & SOLICITOR
1 Keefer Road
St. Catharines, Ontario L2M 6K4
Email: bert@bakkerlaw.ca
East of Lock 1 - on site parking
905-688-9352
Albert J Bakker

ARIE HOOGERBRUGGE
Associate Broker
RE/MAX
DelMarRealty Inc.
840 Queenston Rd.
Stoney Creek,
ON L8G 4A8
Ph: 905-662-5300 Fax: 905-664-2300

R. HAALBOOM, Q.C.
Barrister Solicitor Notary
Richard Rijk Haalboom, Q.C., B.A., J.D
7 Duke St. West **Ph: 519-579-2920**
Suite 304 **Fax: 519-576-0471**
Kitchener, Ontario N2H 6N7
E-mail: richard@haalboom.ca

Classifieds

100th Birthdays

With gratefulness to God for his love and faithfulness to our mother,

Grace De Jong

We celebrated her **100th Birthday** on May 4, 2009.
She continues to live in the comfort of the words of Isaiah 46:4
Even in your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you.

We pray that Mom may continue to experience God's peace.

With love from your children
Marguerite & Bill Schenk
Henry & Grace De Jong
Eileen & Don Wallis
Bea Kruisselbrink

Correspondence: Vision Nursing Home
129 Wellington St, Sarnia ON N7T 1G3

With joy and thankfulness to God for the long and good life she has lived, we announce the **100th Birthday** of

Grace (Grietje) VanderBorgh-Oldenziel

on May 15, 2009

May God continue to bless her as long as she lives on this earth.

Her grateful children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren

Address: Strathmere Lodge
Box 5000, Strathroy ON N7G 3J3

Anniversary

1959 Dunnville, Ontario 2009

And now, my sons listen to me:
Blessed are those who keep my ways. Proverbs 8:32

With thankfulness in our hearts to our Heavenly Father who kept us all these years, We celebrate the 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 15, 2009 of

Richard and Ann Hoekstra (nee VanderBeek)

Children: Edward & Marjorie Hoekstra, *Dunnville, Ont.*
Freda & Allen KleineDeters, *Grand Rapids. MI.*
Pete & Joanne Hoekstra, *Dunnville, Ont.*
Brenda & Brian Wagter, *Lowbanks, Ont.*
Wendy & Bernie Korten, *Dunnville, Ont.*
Michael & Jennifer Hoekstra, *Caledonia, Ont.*
22 Grandchildren, 1 great-granddaughter and granddaughter Natalie in heaven.

Home address: 113 Jarrett Place. Dunnville ON N1A 3E6

Obituary

After a brief illness, on Easter Monday morning, April 13, 2009, the Lord called

Alice Los

to the heavenly room which Jesus had reserved for her. She was in her 80th year.

She is remembered with love and affection by her husband of almost 59 years, Rev. Dirk Los.
Our sorrow is great and deep but Christ's resurrection is our strength and comfort.
Alice knew that her Redeemer lives. (Job 19:25)

Alice wrote a regular column, "Small Talk", for the former *Calvinist Contact* during the 1970s and 1980s and was actively involved in the Canadian Federation of Christian Reformed Women for several years.

She is survived by her six children, 24 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Marian & Keith Knight, *Guelph, Ont.*
Erika & Jonathan Bakker, *Seattle, Wash.*
Elise & Paul Bosscher, *Melbourne, Fla.*
Lauren & Dan De Boer, *Palm Bay, Fla.*
Beth & Paul Terpstra, *Hamilton, Ont.*
Ali, *Hamilton, Ont.*
Joyce Geleynse, *Inkerman, Ont.*
Luke & Phyllis Geleynse, *Kemptville, Ont.*
Emily & Derrick Don, *Inkerman, Ont.*
Bart & Rachel Geleynse, *Kemptville, Ont.*
Reuben & Karina Geleynse, *Mountain, Ont.*
Joel, *Hamilton, Ont.*
Irene & Carel Geleynse, *Chilliwack, B.C.*
Martinus, *Hamilton, Ont.*
David, *Toronto, Ont.*
Maria, *Grand Rapids, Mich.*
Alexa, *Chilliwack, B.C.*
Liesje Van Zwol, *Waterdown, Ont.*
Jessica, *London, Ont.*
Karina & Brian Vaandering, *Brantford, Ont.*
George, *Waterdown, Ont.*
Bill & Ingrid Los, *Listowel, Ont.*
Robin & Joel Dykstra, *Listowel, Ont.*
Rosanna, *Calgary, Alta.*
Derek & Chandra Los, *Listowel, Ont.*
Megan, *Listowel, Ont.*
Janelle, *Listowel, Ont.*
Chris & Nell Los, *Woodstock, Ont.*
Kevin, *Woodstock, Ont.*
Amy, *Woodstock, Ont.*

Also survived by sister Grace & Kees Meyer (*Cambridge*), niece Margaret & Richard DenBok (*Cambridge*) and several sisters and brothers in The Netherlands and the United States.

Funeral services were held on Thursday, April 16 in Listowel Christian Reformed Church.

Correspondence: Rev. Dirk Los, RR 2, Listowel ON N4W 3G7

We at *Christian Courier* thank God for the many fine columns written years ago by Alice Los. Her voice was one of wisdom and caring. May God comfort Rev. Los and the family.

A **charitable** gift **annuity** offers:

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

- the peace of mind of a guaranteed lifetime income, largely tax free
- the satisfaction of knowing that you will be providing a future gift for Redeemer University College

Blended rate of 6 - 10% (capital returned & interest) for those over 65.
Please contact us for your own confidential, no-obligation quote.
Information available on other gift-planning options as well.

Christian Stewardship Services

Redeemer University College 777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario L9K 1J4
905-648-2139 ext. 4205 (Ben) stewardship@redeemer.on.ca

Be sure to check the Calendar of Events for all the church anniversaries, concerts, etc.

"Founded in Faith...together on a journey"

Faith Christian Reformed Church of Burlington, Ontario
invites friends and past members to celebrate with them
25 years of God's faithfulness.

On Saturday, June 13, we are planning a BBQ beginning at 5:00 p.m. with an evening of fellowship at Faith CRC, 2265 Mountainside Drive, Burlington
On Sunday, June 14, a service of celebration will be held at Compass Point Church (formerly Brant Bible Church) at 2501 Eaglesfield Drive in Burlington at 2:30p.m.
All are welcome.
For complete details please access our website at www.faithcrc.ca or contact the church office at
905-336-5353
We also welcome your stories, memories and pictures at 25years@faithcrc.ca

DISCOVER GREECE AND TURKEY!

Experience ancient culture and learn about the seven churches of Revelation. Hear how God is reaching people for Christ through *Back to God Ministries International.*

Join Director Bob Heerspink for an October 2009
Tour with a Purpose.
For more information contact Corrie at 888.588.3388 or cmulder@crcna.org

Low Interest Rates?

Ever considered a charitable *GIFT ANNUITY?*

Sex and Age		Rate /amount		Charitable receipt	Tax Free	Taxable
Male	70	5.97%	$1,194	$5,791	$1,084	$110
Female	75	6.20%	$1240	$6,010	$1,202	$38

Amount based on sample of $20,000
Sample for joint life annuity (payable as long as either person is alive)

Male 75 & Female 75	5.59%	$1,118	$4,889	$1,045	$73

Call or fax for an explanatory brochure and/or confidential no-obligation quotation.
Phone: 416-410-4244 | Fax: 416-465-6367 | www.linkcharity.ca

LinkCharity Canada Inc

1-800-387-8146 | 45 Harriet St. **TORONTO**, ON M4L 2G1

Travel /ForSale /Jobs

For Rent

House for Rent – 3 bedroom + den, 1-1/2 storey centrally located to London,Woodstock, Tillsonburg, and St. Thomas. $750.00 per month plus utilities.

Phone No.: **519-269-3939**

Vacation

For rent: 2 bedroom, 2 bath **guest cottage** in **Tallahasee, Florida**. $650 per week furnished with linens, close to state park, hiking & biking trails, tennis. Call **850-386-6648**

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA
Coming to Alberta? Stay in one of our cozy cottages.
Contact Ernst & Louise Sluijmers
403-329-8181 www.elbas.com

Holiday accomodation in Holland with vehicle rentals and tours.
www.chestnutlane.nl

Welkom

Georgetown CRC is looking for an energtic, committed

full-time Youth Pastor

to join our ministry team.
For more information please contact us at 9 05-877-4322 or at gcrcrecruiter@live.ca

---

LITTLE EUROPE RESORT AND TRAILER PARK

Bracebridge, Muskoka

Plan a successful vacation at our resort known for it's Dutch Hospitality. Reasonable rates for **cottage rentals**. Excellent for **camping, swimming** and **fishing** (ideal for group camping). Showers available. "Little Europe" is located 10 km. east of Hwy 11 on Hwy 118 East, past the Muskoka Airport.

Roel & Riet Bakema Phone: 705-645-2738
Little Europe Resort
1033 Ashley Lane, RR 3, Bracebridge ON P1L 1X1

No pets please

Are you interested in ministry in the heart of Vancouver Island?
The **Alberni Valley Christian Reformed Church** is looking to hire a

Youth and Worship Coordinator

For a detailed description of this full-time opportunity please visit www.avcrc.org
Please send inquiries or resumes to AVCRCsearch@live.ca

NEW LIFE CRC

is a vibrant faith community in **Guelph, Ontario**. Our gift based ministry seeks to follow the Spirit's leading both within our own congregation and in the community around us.

New Life CRC is looking for a

Pastor

who is blessed with the gifts of leadership, including the development of leadership in others, encouragement, pastoral care and teaching. In particular we are seeking someone who can provide energetic and creative support to our ministries and be a mentor to our new members and our youth.

The successful candidate(s) must be theologically trained and open to ordination in the CRCNA. Our new Pastor will be part of a team ministry and fellowship with a multi-generational congregation.

Direct inquiries and resumes to the Administrator of the Search Committee, Nicole Ensing at **worship@newlifecrc.net**.

Hamilton District Christian High School
seeks a qualified person for the position of

Head Custodian/Maintenance

This person will be responsible for maintaining an attractive, sanitary and safe facility; providing adequate arrangements for classroom activities, meetings, and events (including rentals); and supervising of other custodial employees.

Applications can be forwarded by June 1st to gvankampen@hdch.org.
Visit "Career Opportunities" www.hdch.org for more information.

SHALOM MANOR FOUNDATION

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The Shalom Manor Foundation is seeking an experienced development director and fund developer to develop and implement the recently established Shalom Manor Foundation and its program for Shalom Manor, a Christian long-term care community.

Responsible to the Foundation Board of Directors, the successful candidate will participate in capital campaigns, promote planned giving and the established endowment, as well as increase opportunities for sustained operational funding within the Reformed Christian community and elsewhere. The successful candidate will embody commitment and understanding of the Reformed Christian community, be a motivated and strategic thinking individual with excellent donor relations skills and possess the ability to achieve financial goals by planning, implementing and managing fund development strategy. This is a .5 FTE position with opportunities to develop into a full time position.

For a complete job description visit our website at www.shalommanor.ca.

Qualified candidates should forward a resume and cover letter with salary expectations to:

Mr. Ron Vahrmeyer, Chair
Shalom Manor Foundation
12 Bartlett Avenue
Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5

Closing Date: **May 25, 2009**

We wish to thank all applicants for their interest and effort in applying for this position. However, only candidates selected for interviews will be contacted.

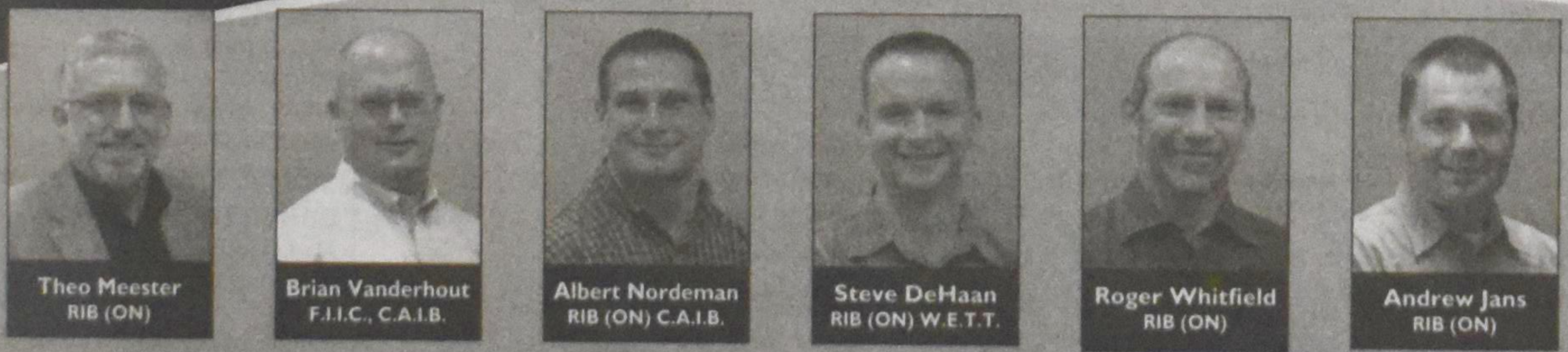
Experienced Cabinetmaker

required for a custom woodworking shop in the **Niagara area.**

We are looking for a full time skilled cabinetmaker who is talented in the woodworking field. This individual must be able to be able to read blueprints, cut, assemble, install cabinets and work with a very fine eye for detail. We are looking for an individual to work as a foreman, who has an excellent work ethic, and a Christian outlook.

Please submit resumes to
maria@fijnwoodworking.com or call (905)957-7887.

Call our EXPERIENCED TEAM of PROFESSIONALS for a quote Today!



Toll-free: 1 800-465-8256
Tel: 905 957 2333
www.meesterinsurance.com

o/b P.V. & V. Insurance Centre Ltd.

MEESTER INSURANCE CENTRE

NEW! Christian Courier has a group on facebook

http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=50535489152
or search groups, keywords Christian Courier.
We would like to know your ideas!

The Christian Male Chorus Association of Southwestern Ontario presents a

Festival of Praise Concert

featuring
Nine Male Choirs (over 300 men)
Singing all Sacred Mass Numbers

Saturday, May 23, 2009

Centennial Hall, London.
550 Wellington Street
Time: 7:30 PM - Doors open 6:30 PM
Hosted by: St. Thomas District Male Choir
"Crescendo"

For Tickets $13.00 and information, call (519) 637-4357 or (519) 631-9245

Classifieds

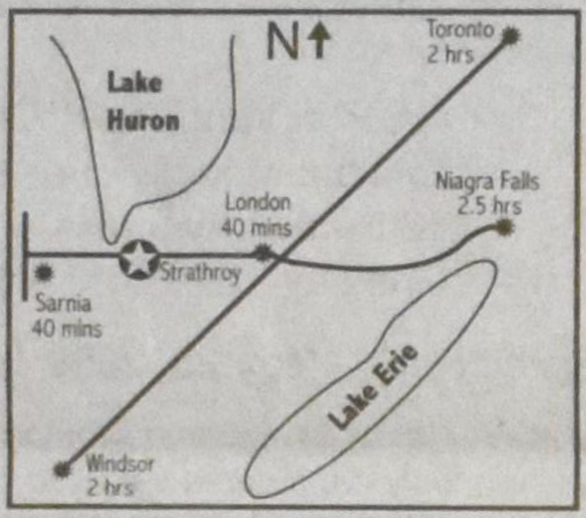
TRILLIUM VILLAGE is pleased to announce that its latest multiple residence building "The Concorde" is now available for occupancy.

This state-of-the-art modern facility offers you the quiet, secure comfort you are looking for at a price you can afford.

All 75 units are designed and built for you to enjoy your retirement life at home to the fullest and to allow you more time to do the things you have always wanted to do. Contact us now and let us introduce you to this new concept of living and enjoying retirement. Make sure to ask us about the equity leasing options available to you.

For your convenience we are pleased to offer you an open house May 2, 9 and 23 for your viewing pleasure or call for an appointment to view at your convenience.

600 Saulsbury St., Strathroy
Carol Speelman
Sutton Group Preferred Realty Inc. Brokerage
519-246-1600
Sue Bork
Royal LePage Landco Realty Brokerage
519-205-2675
Steve Reitsma
Manager Trillium Village
519-245-3830



A diverse community built on Christian values
400 Dominion Street, Strathroy, Ontario, Canada
www.trilliumvillage.ca

---

www.christianhousing.ca
is a rental property database for Christian landlords and prospective Christian tenants!
Landlords can quickly and inexpensively create an ad to show their rental properties, complete with lots of descriptive text and multiple pictures.
Students and Families can search through the listings by province & city and then contact the landlords directly.
The site is now 1 year old and online traffic is steadily increasing as more people become aware of its existence.

De Nederlandse COURANT

North America's oldest and most published Dutch language paper and exclusive aftermarket distributor of the Libelle and Margriet magazines in its 54th year of publication.

SPECIAL NEW SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

De Nederlandse COURANT: ❑ 1 year $15.00 (regular $30.00)
❑ 2 years $35.00 (regular $57.00)

❑ **Margriet or** ❑ **Libelle with De Nederlandse COURANT:**
❑ 1 year $100.00 (regular $150.00)
❑ 2 years $190.00 (regular $270.00)

Name:______________________
Address:______________________
City/Code:______________________
Phone:______________ **E-Mail:**______________

Mail coupon with your cheque to:
De Nederlandse COURANT
2110 Hunt Crescent, Burlington ON L7M 2N9

MARANATHA HOMES

Living **independently** in Christian **community**

MARANATHA HOMES, located in south Burlington near many amenities, is a place where Christian seniors can enjoy independent living in community with others.

- Reasonable rent rates at $740 per month
- Newly renovated units
- Award winning architectural design
- Well maintained building and grounds
- No condo fees or utility bills

All this and more make Maranatha Homes an attractive and affordable accommodation for seniors.

For further information contact: Rosanne van der Woerd,
109-3260 New St. Burlington,On. L7N 3L4
905-681-0311 Email: rvanderwoerd@sympatico.ca

Tyler vanMiddelkoop
CFP, CLU

Beat the Bank.

Call me today for a no obligation assessment on your Mortgage Insurance.

P.V.&V. Financial Centre
905 632 0240
1 866 694 7272
www.pvv-insurance.com

Unique Oak European Furniture
at the
Furniture Barn

Imported from
Belgium & Holland

Couches, Chairs
Tables, Wall Units
Decorative Items
'Dutch Bikes'

'Old World' Craftsmanship & Comfort

'pop in & enjoy a cup of coffee'

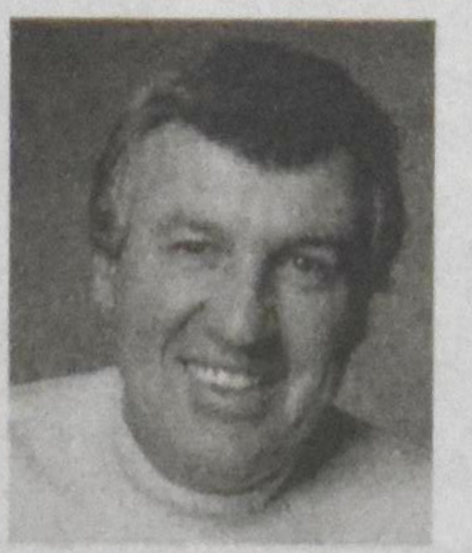
***app'ts/info call:* 905 563-0209 Herman & Janny Dunnink**
51383 Hewitt Rd. Wainfleet hjdunnink@hotmail.com

Put our experience to work for you.

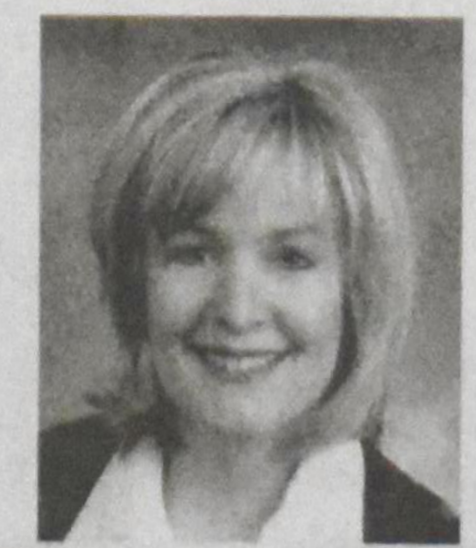
THE KLOET SCHURINGA TEAM RE/MAX

Outstanding agents. Outstanding results.

Lifetime Achievement Award
RE/MAX Platinum Award
HALL OF FAME



George Kloet
Sales Representative
gkloet@trebnet.com
www.georgekloet.com



Pauline Schuringa
Sales Representative
pschuringa@trebnet.com
www.paulineschuringa.com

HALL OF FAME

RE/MAX Realty Enterprises Inc., Brokerage
1697 Lakeshore Road West
Mississauga, ON L5J 1J4
Tel.905.855.2200

Book for Sale

Igor the Acolyte

Aren P. Geisterfer is the author of this novel which is essentially fiction, though it is based on historical war events.

It deals with the two wars in Indonesia between 1941 thru the spring of 1946. It is written from the perspective of a 14-year-old boy and is written in the lingua franca of young teenagers.

This story contains explicit material suitable for mature readers. 650 pages Price $49.00 excludes Can. postage

Email:
arengeisterfer@sympatico.ca
or 28 Rue Osgoode,
Gatineau QC J9H 1R7

For the book review see March 9 issue p.17

Classifieds

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Christian Courier is published on the second and fourth Monday of each month. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Wednesday, 12 days prior to publication date.

RATE: (GST added to rates listed)
All personal and family announcements: $6.00 per square inch.
Email: **rose@christiancourier.ca**
Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: $8.00 per square inch.
email: **ads@christiancourier.ca**

PHOTOS: There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged per square inch but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. We need either an original photo (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.

PERSONAL ADS: *Christian Courier* would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $25. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $8 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS: We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* and to parents who announce a child's birth in our paper. If you want to take advantage of this offer, please let us know when placing your ad.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD
Mail: Christian Courier
5 Joanna Dr
St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
e-mail: see above

OTHER INFORMATION: *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format and editing style and is not responsible for any errors due to hand-written or phoned-in advertisements.

See our website for issue dates, and deadlines.

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 9 Grand Philharmonic Choir of Kitchener, Ontario under the direction of Howard Dyck, will be performing Haydn's Creation. Time 7:30, Place, Centre in the Square, **Kitchener,** Ontario. For tickets call 519-578-1570 or 1-800-265-8977. For any other information: Broer@csolve.net

May 23 Combined nine Male Choirs (over 300 voices) from Southwestern Ontario, will present D. V. a Festival of Praise Concert, singing all Sacred mass numbers, at the Centennial Hall, 555 Wellington Street, London, Ontario. Saturday, at time 7:30 p.m. Doors open 6:30 p.m. Tickets $13.00 from all choir members and host Choir: St. Thomas District Male Choir "Crescendo". For tickets and information please call: (519) 637-4357 or (519) 631-9245 No reserved seating.

May 30 John Knox Christian School, **Brampton**, would like to invite former students & staff to our 50th Anniversary Celebrations. Golf Tournament 7:00 a.m., Open House 4-6 p.m. & dinner 6:30 p.m. See our website for details & registration information: www.bramptonjkcs.org or email us: blessings@bramptonjkcs.org Please bring your JKCS memorabilia for the Open House.

May 30 The Liberation Choir presents their Spring Joy Concert. See ad this issue.

May 30, 31 First CRC **Sarnia**, Ontario will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. See ad this issue

May 30, 31 Aylmer, ON CRC will be celebrating its 60th anniversary. An evening of entertainment and desserts will be held on Saturday night beginning at 7 p.m. at Immanuel Christian School. Sunday at 10 a.m. we will have a special service led by former pastor Rev. Chris Spoor. Evening service (7 p.m.) of praise and worship led by our present pastors. All friends and former members are invited and most welcome to join in this celebration. For more info, contact: annette@familyflowers.ca or call the church office at 519-773-3025

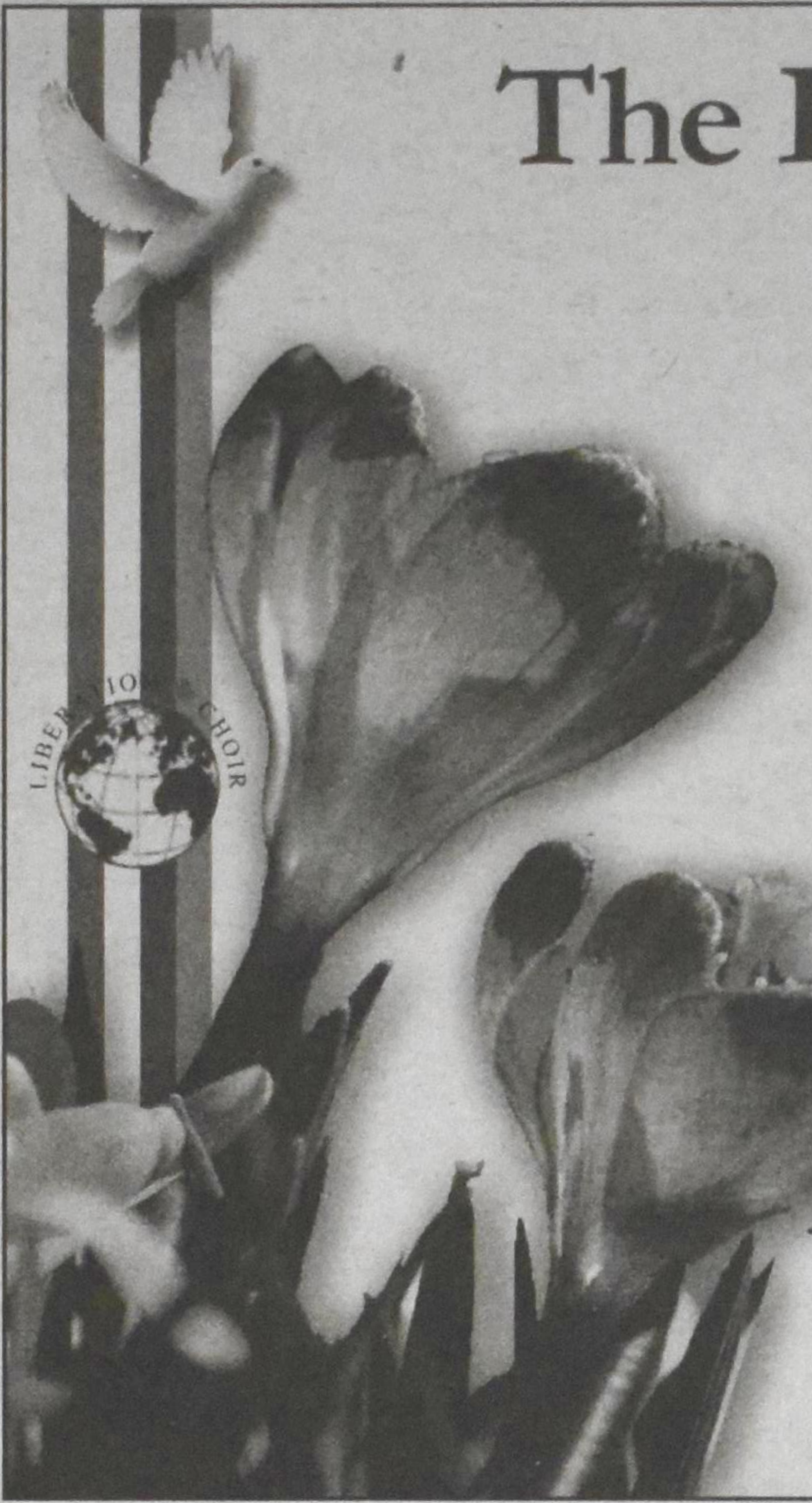
May 31 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. John Klomps will be preaching.

June 3-5 ACROSS BORDERS an international conference featuring Dutch-Canadian and Dutch-American history and culture, to be held at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster**. For more details please contact Petra Zantingh pzantingh@redeemer.ca 905.648.2131

June 10 Hollandse Dag in the Moorefield Community Centre. See ad below.

June 15 Faith CRC, **Burlington**, 25 year anniversary. See ad.

Oct 3 The next Netherlands Bazaar will be held in the Thornhill Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Ave. in **Thornhill**, Ontario



The Liberation Choir

presents our

Spring Joy Concert

with Stuart Laughton, Trumpet

May 30, 2009 at 7.30 pm

St George's Anglican Church

99 Woolwich Street, Guelph

Director - Rob Kinnear

Guest Organist - Chris Dawes

Accompanist - Sharon Sandink

Tickets $15.00

For tickets Contact Tom Overbeek

Tom.overbeek@sympatico.ca, 519-941-8518

Or Gail Wemekamp

Gwemekamp@cogeco.ca, 905-635-4129

Tickets available at the door

---

wbm

Wallaceburg Bookbinding

& MFG. CO. LTD.

We Bind, Rebind and Restore

Save money– Don't buy replacements!

Churches: Send us one of your hymnals as a sample and we will rebind it at no cost. *Normal price for quantities of five or more-$8.75*

Personal Orders: We will bind short run editions e.g. family histories as well as rebinding and restoring personal books.

1-800-214-2463 FAX (519)627-6922

95 Arnold St. Wallaceburg ON N8A 3P3 http://wbmbindery.com

The famous CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL CONCERT in Roy Thomson Hall is back!

With Leendert Kooij and Andre Knevel and many wonderful guests.

Friday **November 20 2009** D.V. at 7:30 p.m.

Mark the date.

Tickets available soon.

Call 416-636-9779 or Email landmkooy@rogers.com

★ 39 YEARS OF SERVICE ★

CRC EXTENSION FUND

"...serving Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools since 1970"

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

New rates to June 30, 2009

We pay **3.25%** on CRC deposits.

Earn approx. **3.5%** on RRP/RRIF/TFSA

Write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund

45 Harriet St, Toronto ON M4L 2G1

Fax: 416-465-636 **Call**: **416-461-1207**

First CRC Sarnia, Ontario will be celebrating the

75th anniversary

of its organization the weekend of **May 30, 31**.

A banquet will be held on Saturday night with special services held on Sunday.

All friends and former members are centainly invited and welcome to join in this celebration.

For more information or to order banquet tickets please e-mail us at 1crc75@gmail.com or call the church office at **519-336-8808.**

ADA REALTY LTD

2011-137 Ave. Suite 404

Edmonton AB T5A 4W2

780-473-8149

Sid Vandermeulen

Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton & district.

Home of confidence

Het veertig-jarig (40) bestaan van de

HOLLANDSE DAG

wordt gevierd Woensdag **10 Juni** om 10 uur in de **Moorfield** Community Center.

Intree: $10 per persoon.

Samenzang; voordrachten; muziek door Mr. Ted Lucas en optreden van De Zingende Sysjes o.l.v. Joyce Kuper.

Spreker: Ds John Klomps van Mississauga, ON

Lunch meenemen en uw eigen koffie kop.

Vry koffie en gebak.

Hier ontmoet je heel veel vrienden en kennissen
En hun gezelschap wil je zeker niet missen
Daarom, voor gezelligheid en plezierig uitgaan,
Moet je DE HOLLANDSE DAG zeker niet overslaan,

Voor nadere informatie telefoneer:

Hilbert Rumph, Drayton ON Tel. 519-638-2053

UNIGLOBE

DCA Travel & Cruise

Visit us at:
www.uniglobedcatravel.com
info@uniglobedcatravel.com
TORONTO: 416-224-5211
1-800-667-2525
Canada wide - ticket home delivery

TRAVEL INSURANCE - HEALTH/CANCELLATION/COMPREHENSIVE

SPAIN - 23 DAYS

27 October to 18 November

Hotel Sol Aloha Puerto

16 nights - 32 meals

5 night cruise

Navigator of Seas to French Riviera and Corsica

all meals and gratuities

Incl. air $2479 taxes $420

AMSTERDAM

KLM/AIR TRANSAT From CA $299

taxes CA $316 plus service fees

- October departures

MSC TRANSATLANTIC CRUISE 18 DAYS

Venice/Fort Lauderdale Oct 24-Nov10

$843.70 | port charges $455. | govt. fees $76.05 | transfers $59.80

- kids pay only govt fees/transfers -

- add on option: 6 day tour of Italy

- Air prices on request

This is your Travel Centre for all your Travel Needs!!! On. Reg. 01495998

News

Charting the right course to financial success

Investors Group has been an industry leader in financial services for over 80 years, focused on comprehensive personalized planning, diversified investment solutions, and professional money management.

At Investors Group, we believe that helping you successfully navigate challenging markets is the key to reaching your financial goals and we would like to show you how.

Attend this presentation if you are:

- Concerned about North American and global markets,
- Require professional advice about your current investments,
- Seeking the benefits of a personalized financial plan, focused on your future.

Hosted by:
CLARENCE WEIMA CFP
Senior Financial Consultant

Presentation times and locations:

Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2009
Times: 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.
Location: South Huron Municipal Building
322 Main St. South
Exeter, Ontario.

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2009
Times: 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.
Location: Maranatha Christian Reformed Church,
577 Norwich Avenue,
Woodstock, Ontario.

Please call to confirm your attendance. There is no cost and no obligation but seating will be limited.

519-673-3472 x209
or 1-800-488-9817

clarence.weima@investorsgroup.com

The Plan by IG Investors Group™

Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

™Trademarks owned by IGM Financial Inc. and licensed to its subsidiary corporations.
MP1578 (02/2009)

Odds and Trends

Take a sick day, not a pill

A recent article in *The American Scientist* suggests that letting a fever run its course may be a better idea than trying to lower it. Studies demonstrated that people who had several separate infections, each accompanied by a fever, "significantly reduced the likelihood of developing cancer" later in life. Researchers believe a fever can eliminate potentially malignant cells; there is also some evidence that a fever flushes out artery-clogging fat in the bloodstream. Score another point for the tales of wise old wives: feed a cold, starve a fever and stop heading to the pharmacy for every flushed brow.

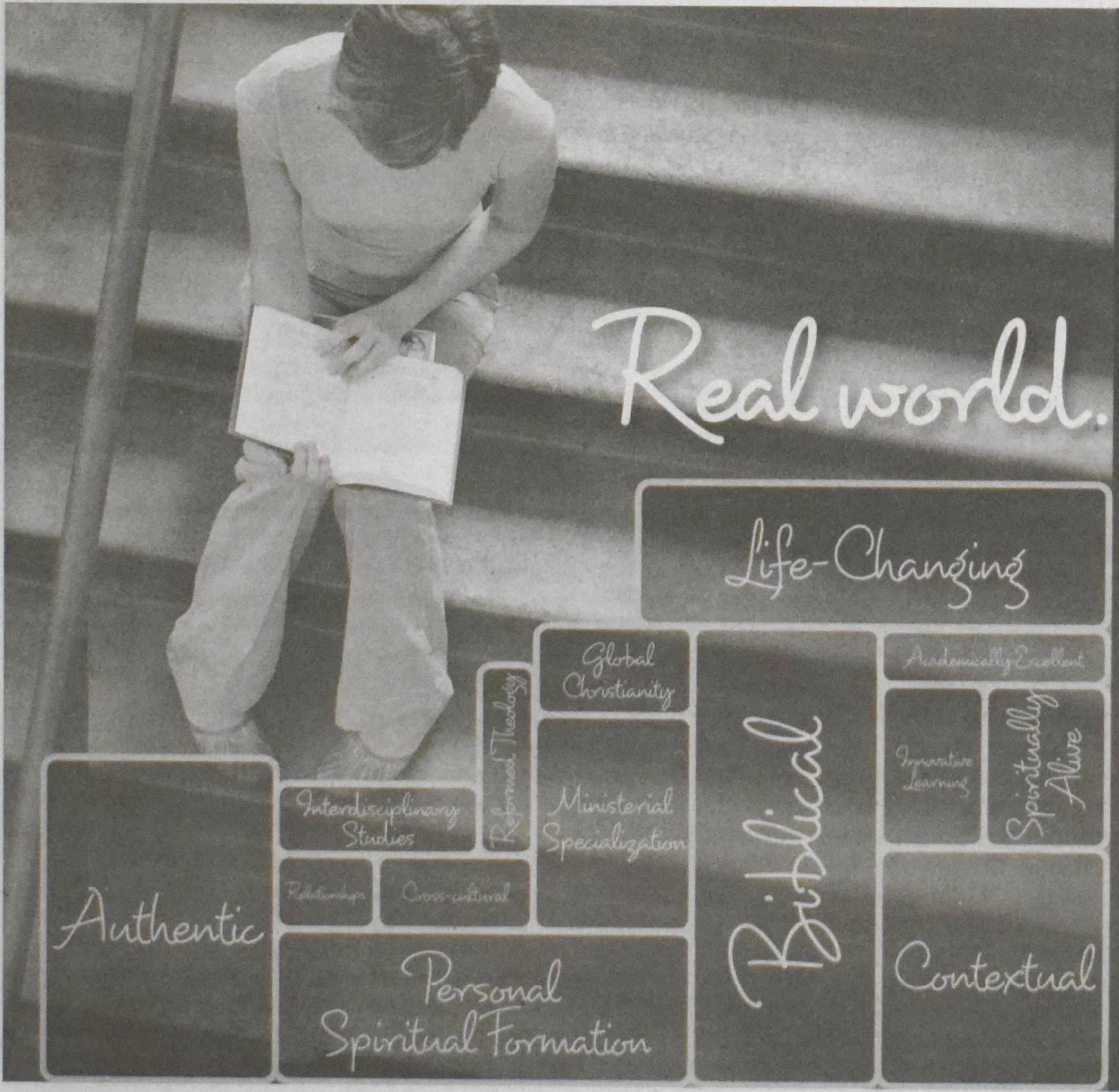
A lucrative village

A few weeks ago, a popular CBC radio show called *The Debaters* informed its audience that Wal-Mart owned Value Village. More people must listen to CBC than I thought, because when I checked online to see if I could figure out the veracity of this statement, more than a few blogs had already started hunting the truth. Most have concluded that it was an error by CBC; Value Village is owned by an American private equity investment firm called Freeman Spogli and Co., not Wal-Mart. Funny how that doesn't seem to make me feel better.

Another myth about thrift stores is that their wares are meant for poor people. Instead, most thrift stores exist to raise money to support the mission of their own organization. Goodwill supports vocational rehabilitation for the disabled; the Salvation Army gives food, shelter, and spiritual guidance to the poor; St. Vincent de Paul is a similar arm of the Catholic church (its proceeds go to emergency shelters, disaster relief, and so on); and Bibles for Missions is a non-denominational Christian organization that gives its profits to the Bible League.

Clearly, not all second-hand shopping is created equal. Value Village is a cleverly marketed business, not a non-profit organization, regardless of who owns it. You might even say it's the Wal-Mart of the tightwad's retail world.

Angela Reitsma Bick



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A community of faith. A center of learning. A life of ministry.

Real ministry.

At Calvin Theological Seminary we have all of the elements you need to construct a solid foundation for your life and for your ministry. Our new Master of Divinity curriculum provides the building blocks for every dimension of a biblical, authentic, contextual and life-changing ministry and is focused on the personal and spiritual formation of every student.

Learn more about our new Master of Divinity curriculum today!

mdiv.calvinseminary.edu